



FLYTIPPERS RUN UP £2M BILL FOR TAXPAYERS IN ONE YEAR



Rubbish that was left on land off Jackson Street in Lye

FLY-TIPPING is costing taxpayers more than £2 million a year with an average 90 incidents taking place EVERY DAY.

Figures from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs show that there were 824 fly tipping incidents in Dudley last year.

But the situation is even worse in neighbouring boroughs with 3,456 fly tipping incidents in Wolverhampton last year, and even that was well below the 4,599 in Walsall, which left that borough with a £350,000 clear up bill.

There were 4,140 incidents in Sandwell which cost Sandwell Council £250,000 to clean up.

An investigation by our sister paper the

Express & Star found there were 32,569 reports of waste being dumped illegally to councils across the Black Country, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Birmingham last year – a 16 per cent increase from 2012/13.

Organised criminal gangs who offer to dispose of rubbish at a knockdown price are believed to be behind 'industrial scale' dumping seen in recent months.

It costs the region's councils £1.8m to remove dumped waste last year and a further £580,000 to investigate offences.

But only £54,706 was recouped through fines at court with authorities taking just 58 prosecutions.

And only 456 fixed penalty notices were issued last year in the Midlands which

would have returned between a further £54,000 and £182,000.

In May 2016, councils were given the power to impose £400 fixed-penalty notices for fly-tipping. But critics say that for criminal gangs – or even ordinary householders – it is worth taking the risk because the fine can be cheaper than hiring a skip for a fortnight. Rising waste charges and moves to fortnightly bin collections have also been blamed.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said travellers, who he likened to 'roving vagabonds' were behind some of the large scale dumping.

There were also 417 cases in South Staffordshire.

HEALTH

Medical practice is told to improve

A MEDICAL practice has been told to improve after inspectors found problems with the check-ups on emergency medical supplies.

The Care Quality Commission found faults with Pedmore Medical Practice's safety and leadership and rated it as 'requiring improvement' in the latest inspection. But the practice on Pedmore Road has appealed the CQC's decision, citing 'inconsistencies in the latest inspection.'

The health watchdog said three areas, out of five, 'required improvement', under the headings of 'safe', 'leadership' and 'effective'.

But inspectors also found its care and responsiveness was 'good'.

LEISURE

ScaryCanary music venue set to close

A POPULAR live music venue in Stourbridge is to close its doors at the end of the month.

ScaryCanaryOwner Stacey Smith made the announcement on Facebook. She said in her post she was moving on to new projects and it was 'not a decision made lightly'.

ScaryCanary, on High Street, started out as a fashion store before launching a music venue three years ago. It will remain open until March 31 with events planned for the final four weeks.

BEER

Pub of the year prize for Beacon

A SEDGLEY pub has been named best in Dudley and South Staffordshire by the Campaign for Real Ale.

The award will be presented to the Beacon Hotel in Bilston Street on Wednesday.

A cult beer brewed at the pub has also been voted champion beer of the West Midlands. The Bob Jones Memorial Cup was presented by Sarah Edmondson to Simon Massey, head brewer of the Sarah Hughes Brewery, for its six per cent Dark Ruby Mild. Sarah Edmondson is widow of former West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner and Camra activist Bob Jones.

INSIDE

CHEERS! MEET PUB LANDLORD



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Tories and Ukip unite to reject 5pc hike at eleventh hour

COUNCIL TAX RISE CUT IN PROTEST

A PLANNED council tax hike of nearly five per cent was thrown out after the Conservatives and UKIP teamed up to reject the budget put forward by Labour-led Dudley Council.

Now Dudley borough residents will still see a council tax rise of 3.99 per cent from April, as part of an agreement reached following a lengthy, and at times chaotic, full meeting of the local authority, which lasted almost five hours this week.

The proposed budget included a council tax rise of 4.99 per cent, which is the highest that can be implemented by councillors without requiring a public referendum.

Labour argued that the increase is needed to save £26 million over the next three years. Presenting the budget, cabinet member for finance Councillor David Sparks said: "It is incumbent on any member moving an amendment for any lesser amount to specify what they would cut."

Tory finance spokesman Councillor Steve Clark then put forward an amendment suggesting the alternative council tax rise of 3.99 per cent, and also for all-out elections to be held every four years, with the first taking place in May next year.

"Labour have blamed Tory cuts for their own mismanagement," said Councillor Clark. "You've got to stop this smoke and mirror politics."

"Dudley's Labour-controlled authority has spent £1.3m on consulting this year alone. Six million over the last four years, doing the job we pay our officers for."

Conservative group leader Councillor Patrick Harley said moving to the all-out election system, selecting all council members every four years instead of a third of members at a time, would save the council around £250,000 every non-election year.

Report by Judith Hawkins

In response, leader of the council Labour's Pete Lowe described it as a 'ridiculous amendment', and added: "Their own party, when they are in positions of power, are recommending 4.99 per cent."

UKIP's Bill Etheridge said: "I don't believe we have gone far enough with reform and change to justify the kind of tax increases that are on the table here."

Initially the amendment was lost by 42 votes against, and 29 in favour.

However Labour's budget was then narrowly rejected with 36 against and 35 in favour, forcing the councillors to continue their debate until they reached an agreement over the council tax rate, which by law must be decided upon by March 11.

The council chamber descended into shouting with repeated adjournments, after Councillor Clark presented their proposals again, but this time as a motion, with a UKIP amendment requesting that the authority sources a private company to deliver savings of five per cent from procurement over the next three years, paid on results.

The Conservative motion, and UKIP amendment, was then approved by 36 to 35.

Pooches set tails wagging at Crufts



Ready to compete at Crufts, Suzanne Conway, of Upper Gornal, with her shih tzu Horace

IT'S the world's biggest dog show – and it's back. Crufts – the Oscars of the canine world – returns this week, featuring cute, cuddly and sometimes bizarre looking dogs.

Dog lovers from across the Black Country will be flocking to Birmingham's NEC in their masses. Around 22,000 dogs from across the world, as well as 150,000 dog lovers, will turn out for the show, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary.

Hundreds of dog owners from across the Black Country and are putting the final preparations together ready for the prestigious four-day event, from Thursday to Sunday, which covers 25 acres at the NEC.

Shih Tzu breeder Suzanne Conway, of Upper Gornal, will be showing Horace and Stara, both nine months, and has high hopes the pair will follow her success in 2015 in the breeders competition.

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Road closures during work on sewer

SEVERN Trent is planning to spend half a million pounds to increase the capacity of its sewers in Stourbridge to help prevent flooding that has affected a primary school in the past.

The company will install bigger sewers under the Bells Lane area of Wordsley to increase the capacity by 350,000 litres, so helping make sure Ashwood Park Primary School and local residents are not affected by sewer flooding in the future.

And engineers leading the project are now inviting local people to find out more about the scheme, which is scheduled to start at the end of March.

Seng Cheah, from Severn Trent, explains: "We're making a big investment in the area but

it'll be worth every penny if it stops the flooding issues that local people have been experienced in the past.

Questions

"Sewer flooding is the last thing anyone wants to deal with and that's why we've taken the decision to upgrade our network for the future but, before we begin work, we want to speak to local people about our plans and to invite them to join us at our drop-in session to ask any questions they may have."

The session will take place at Ashwood Park Primary School in Bells Lane, Stourbridge between

4pm and 6.30pm on Thursday (March 16). Seng added: "Our contractors from Amey will begin work on Monday, March 27, and the project should be completed by the end of the year."

"We're working hard to minimise disruption to the local community while we work but we'll need some road closures to make sure our engineers can work safely. We'll make sure fully signposted diversions are in place and will allow access to homes and businesses. Hopefully everyone will realise that the huge benefits of the project will be worth the minor disruption."

For more updates about the work visit www.stw.works website.

Terrorism hotspot is right on our doorstep

THE West Midlands is one of the terrorist hotspots of the UK, a major new report warns.

Islamist terrorism has been on the rise in the region over the past 20 years with a significant proportion of convictions in Birmingham and the Black Country.

The findings are in a report published in Parliament by think tank the Henry Jackson Society. The 1,000-page report found that of 269 people convicted of terrorism offences between 1998 and 2015, 49 came from the West Midlands - making it the UK's second major terrorism hotspot, behind London. Two convictions came from Sandwell, one from Wolverhampton and one from Dudley, while 39 came from Birmingham, with Hall Green and Hodge Hill highlighted.

Khaled Abusalama, from Smethwick, was convicted for sending funds to Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. He was jailed in 2007 for 22 months.

Plot

Mohammed Saud, of Smethwick, was jailed for 18 years and nine months for being part of a bomb plot in West Yorkshire in 2013. He was convicted after two of his accomplices, Jewell Uddin and Omar Mohammed Khan, were stopped by police on the M1 as they travelled back to Birmingham. An IED was found in the vehicle.

Usman Choudhary, from Dudley, was convicted in 2015 for disseminating terrorist material. He was jailed for nine months.

Bilal Zaheer Ahmad, of Wolverhampton, was jailed for 12 years in 2011 for posting a message on a website encouraging the murder of MPs who voted in favour of the Iraq war.

In August last year - a period not covered by the report - seven members of a 13-strong Walsall terror cell were convicted.

A record number of people called West Midlands Police's anti-terrorist hotline last year - 22,000 calls. It comes as the police force claims the 'scale, volume and complexity' of the terror threat continues to grow.

The force is supporting a national campaign called "Make Nothing Happen" that focuses on the critical role the public can play in defeating terrorism.

Runners take rain in their stride



Runners in the Resolution Run at Hagley Hall with, centre, Jade Clifton and Lucy Parkes from Halesowen

MORE than 500 people dug out their running shoes to race through the grounds of historic Hagley Hall.

The annual Stroke Association Resolution Run event was the most successful yet, with more people registering to take part than ever before. People could sign up for either a 5k, 10k or 15k run at the event on Sunday, which was one of the 31 taking place across the UK.

Clent Hills and Hagley Rotary Clubs helped to raise awareness

and organise the event alongside the mansion's owner Lord Cobham.

Louise Lawless, community events fundraising manager for the Stroke Association, said: "It was an absolutely fantastic event. I want to thank everyone who took part including a very special thanks to Lord Cobham for hosting the event."

"Despite the awful weather we couldn't believe just how many people chose to come out a run for us and we're hugely grateful for their support. Everyone was in re-

ally high spirit despite it being very wet, cold and muddy."

The money raised through the Resolution Run will help the Stroke Association fund vital research and support people in the West Midlands.

In Dudley, around 400 people took part in the annual Action Heart Five Mile race on Sunday. Twenty five walkers also took part in the event, which raised £8,000 for the Action Heart Centre at Russells Hall Hospital.

Robber fails in bid to get his custodial sentence cut

A TEENAGER from Stourbridge who claimed he was bullied into holding up four corner shops with a replica pistol has failed in a bid to have time behind bars reduced.

Nathan Harper was just 16 when he terrorised staff at the shops in Stourbridge, Quarry Bank, Wollaston and Brierley Hill. He was locked up for 54 months at Wolverhampton Crown Court in September last year.

He was convicted of four counts of possessing an imitation firearm, three robberies and one attempted robbery.

Harper and two accomplices carried out the raids in just under three hours in September 2015, London's Appeal Court heard.

The now 18-year-old tried to force staff to hand over cash by brandishing an imitation pistol but the raiders fled empty-handed from all but one shop - Kingsway Stores in Wollaston - where they grabbed cigarettes off the shelves.

Harper, who can now be named after reaching adulthood, challenged his sentence, claiming it was too harsh. Harper, of Churchward Close, Stourbridge, was of previous good character and claimed he was 'bullied and intimidated' by the older pair.

But Mr Justice Holgate, sitting with Lord Justice Treacy and Judge Griffiths-Jones, said: "There were severe aggravating factors in this case."

"We consider that the judge cannot be criticised for the sentence he imposed."

"For this reason the appeal is dismissed."

Coroner suspends stabbing inquest

A MOTHER who died from stab wounds was carried into a Rowley Regis GPs' surgery, an inquest heard.

Black Country Coroner's Court was told that Tina Billingham, of Granville Road, Cradley Heath, had suffered two stab wounds, one to the heart and another to her stomach and liver.

Senior coroner's officer, Stephen Binsley, explained that the injured 54-year-old was carried from a van into the medical centre on Hawes Lane at around 3.50pm on February 6.

Ronald Cooke, 54, of Granville Road, Cradley Heath, has been charged with murder.

Senior coroner Mr Zafar Siddique, said: "I am formally suspending this inquest until the conclusion of the trial."

Pub of the year is set to get trophy

THE Stourbridge and Halesowen branch of the Campaign for Real Ale will present its pub of the year award on March 25.

Members will visit the 187-year-old Waggon and Horses, Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, for the 1pm presentation.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Call for action on rough sleepers

A COUNCILLOR has called for action over an increasing homelessness problem in Dudley.

Concerns have been raised about the number of rough sleepers across Dudley borough.

Speaking at a meeting of Dudley Council, Conservative councillor David Vickers, member for Halesowen South, suggested empty council houses and flats could be used to provide a place for them to stay. He said: "We have got to get some of these rough sleepers off the street and into homes."

Zoo sells tickets for patriotic party

PLANS are in place for extravagant St George's Day celebrations at Dudley Zoo.

Between 3pm and 7pm on St George's Day - Sunday, April 23 - they'll be hosting a patriotic party in Dudley Castle courtyard, complete with medieval characters, dragons, children's entertainers, crafts, storytelling and stilt walkers.

The tickets, which are valid from 3pm, cost £2.50 per person. Children aged two and younger go free. To book a place, go to the website at www.dudleyzoo.org.uk or call (01384) 215313.

Nightspot's £3k boost for Sunfield

A NIGHTSPOT has helped children with learning needs to develop their skills thanks to a £3,325 donation.

Chicago's in Stourbridge made the presentation to Sunfield Children's Home in Clent, a residential special school and charity, to buy language and occupational therapy equipment.

Jamie Whittingham, general manager of the Ryemarket venue, said: "The donation is from our company's Echo Trust charity to give something back to our local community."

Vets' still among the best places to work

FOR the fifth year in a row, a family-run vets' surgery has been named in the 'Best 100 Best Small Companies To Work For'.

White Cross Vets, which has practices in Wolverhampton, Bloxwich, Tidvale and Kings Heath, achieved the highest placing of any veterinary business, reaching 38 in the prestigious list.

The judging panel surveyed tens of thousands of employees from companies in every sector.

Fundraiser at The Cat

A CHARITY night of music and entertainment is being held at a pub in Enville, near Stourbridge.

The event at The Cat on March 25 will be raising funds for mental health charity Dudley MIND and Epilepsy Action.

Tickets are £8 from 07941 085227.

Officer faces the axe after harassing an ex girlfriend

A POLICE officer from Dudley faces losing his job after admitting harassing his ex-girlfriend, a court heard.

Dean Hickens pretended to be a former partner of his ex Carrie Stimpson, also a serving police officer with West Midlands Police, in text messages in order to check whether she had had an affair.

He also tried to change her Facebook login details and drove past her house in the early hours to see if there was someone else there. Hickens, aged 42, of Dingle Close, admitted harassment without violence.

Mr Tim Talbot-Webb, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton magistrates: "This was a relationship of five years and the couple had been living together. Carrie left the home and it wasn't a happy break-up."

"Mr Hickens went about a course of action that amounted to harassment"

Miss Sue Swann, defending, said Hickens was now on medication for depression and anxiety.

She said: "He knows that he will lose his job. The consequences of this will be devastating for him and in my opinion is a very harsh punishment."

Hickens was sentenced to a 12 month community order, including 20 days of rehabilitation activity, and an eight week curfew between 8.30pm and 7am. He must pay £135 in legal costs, an £85 victim surcharge and £250 compensation.

A spokesman for the force said Pc Hickens would now face internal disciplinary proceedings and his future with the force would be considered.

Bid to tighten rules on smoke

DUDLEY Council is set to implement a borough-wide order enabling them to take legal action over illegal chimney fumes.

At a meeting of the authority's cabinet yesterday (Wednesday), councillors were being asked to approve a new smoke control order in accordance with the Clean Air Act 1993, to declare the whole of the Dudley borough a 'smoke control area'.

This will make it an offence to emit smoke from a chimney unless caused by use of an authorised fuel, or by the use of a fireplace on an approved list.

The council says there are 1,029 properties and 28 areas of land, where buildings could be built, that are not subject to the current smoke control order.

Killing inquest is adjourned again

AN inquest into the death of 24-year-old man fatally stabbed in Brierley Hill has been adjourned again while police hunt suspect Niron Parker-Lee. Mansoor Mahmood, of Baguette Walk, Brierley Hill, died on October 15.

Burglar jailed after raid on radio studio

A CALLOUS crook who broke into a church to strip £8,000 worth of equipment from a community radio station is starting a two-year jail sentence.

Cocaine addict Jason Pettit knew the code to St John's Reform Church in Stourbridge because he had used its food bank, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 38-year-old deactivated the intruder alarm and headed for the room at the rear of the building where Black Country Radio had its studio, explained Mr Waheed Baber, prosecuting.

The defendant then stole speakers, mixer and balancing units, an amplifier and other items before fleeing with the haul during the night of September 8.

Volunteer staff discovered the break-in when they arrived for work early the following morning and the radio station was off air for 18 hours until replacement equipment could be installed.

Pettit disabled CCTV cameras at the scene but missed one which recorded the break-in and led to his capture. A police officer was shown the footage and recognised the offender who was on licence from prison.

Traced

Pettit was arrested at his home on September 20. None of the stolen property has been recovered and a second person involved in the crime is still at large.

Taxi drivers 'up in arms' as police link stabbings

A TAXI driver and another man were stabbed in two attacks during the early hours in Stourbridge which are being linked by police.

The taxi driver was knifed by a passenger at the BP Petrol Station in Pedmore Road, Lye, at around 3.50am on Saturday.

The victim was left with a hand wound and crashed into a stationary car as he tried to get away. The attacker, thought to be with a group of four or five men and women in the taxi, fled the scene.

Just 20 minutes afterwards police found another man with stab wounds less than two miles away in Stourbridge town centre.

The injured man was discovered in an alleyway off St John's Road, Stourbridge Ring Road, at around 4.10am.

The 31-year-old was taken to hospital, where he was treated for two stab injuries to his stomach, one to his back and two cuts to the head. Detectives believe the attacks, which happened in the early hours, are linked and have launched an investigation.

They say the violence is thought to be linked to an altercation between a group of men near to The Arena Nightclub, on Hagley Road.

Running

Detective Sergeant Chris Jones said: "It is believed there had been an earlier dispute between a group of men at a bus stop near to The Arena Nightclub, which then continued into the town centre. This resulted in a man being stabbed and a group of men and women were seen running from the scene."

"We have launched an investigation and so far it's clear that both attacks are linked. I am appealing for anyone who may have seen either attack or who has any information to contact us on 101."

Shaz Saleem, chairman of the Dudley Taxi Association has hit out at the latest attack on a taxi driver in the borough, saying 'enough is enough'. He said: "I'm really angry and the whole trade is up in arms. What will it take for these incidents to be taken more seriously? One of our drivers could get killed. We need to get more support from the police as these incidents are reoccurring. It's getting ridiculous."

Last month cabbie Sheakh Arbaz suffered was beaten up in Dudley by two passengers who stole his takings. There have been more than 3,000 attacks on taxi drivers in the West Midlands during the last decade.

Call to save mental health centre



Joy Collins and other campaigners protest on the steps of Dudley Council House over closure of Dove House

DEMONSTRATORS gathered outside Dudley Council House to protest at the closure of a mental health centre as part of cost-cutting measures.

The protesters are all service users of Dove House, who rely upon its support to manage a range of mental health conditions.

Despite its importance to these vulnerable people, the council has decided to revise its current funding contract with Dudley Mind,

which runs Dove House in the grounds of Dudley's Bushey Fields Hospital. The proposed new contract would not include funding for Dove House, and as such it is expected to shut when the current agreement comes to an end on June 30. It helps 60 people.

Leading the demonstration was service user Joy Collins, of Netherton, who regularly attends the centre. The 52-year-old said: "If this goes I won't have anywhere

else I can go and it's the same for other people. They don't realise how little things can make a big difference."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin brought up his opposition to the closure in the House of Commons.

Adult social care boss Councillor Qadar Zada said: "The unprecedented funding cuts imposed on us by central government mean that we face difficult decisions about the services we provide."

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COUNTY NEWS

Poundland's sales up after takeover

THE Willenhall-based Poundland shops chain achieved a rise in sales in the last three months of 2016.

The business, which was bought by South Africa's Steinhoff last summer for £610 million, had revenue of £448m for the quarter.

It is now part of Steinhoff's general merchandise division, which was up 66 per cent to £1.54 billion. Mrkus Joos, chief executive of the group, which also owns the UK Harveys and Bensons for Beds businesses, said Poundland performed 'ahead of the value creation plan'.

Bev's video aimed at pro-EU crowd

A CROWD-FUNDING campaign to reach out to those who want Britain to remain in the EU has been launched by the Lib Dem's candidate for West Midlands Mayor.

Entrepreneur Beverley Nielsen is trying to raise £75,000 to compete with the powerful party machines of her two main rivals, Conservative Andy Street and Labour's Sion Simon.

So far she has raised £435 from 16 donations. In an online video, she says she is operating on 'something of a shoe string'. It can be viewed at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/beverleynielsen

New flights due to Moldova city

BIRMINGHAM Airport is set to welcome another new scheduled airline this summer.

From June, Fly One is offering a new route to the capital of Eastern European country Moldova.

The flights will operate three times a week from Birmingham, using an Airbus A319 with 144 seats each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The flight will arrive into Birmingham from Chisinau at 12.25pm and will depart at 1.20pm.

Liquid lunches can be a works taboo

DRINKING alcohol at lunchtime is considered one of the biggest taboos for West Midland workers, according to new research.

When asked what they believe to be the biggest lunchtime taboos, regional respondents said drinking alcohol on your lunch break (42.3 per cent), eating smelly food (38.5 per cent), eating too unhealthily (30.8 per cent), taking too long on your lunch break (23.1 per cent) and making a mess of shared kitchen areas (21.3 per cent).

Robin's Small show

SOUL singer Heather Small, who was the lead singer in hit 90s band M People, will be performing in the Black Country.

Heather and her band will be in action at The Robin 2, Bilston, on October 14. Advance tickets are £29.50 from the club on 01902 401211.



Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby with the wristbands on This Morning



Phil shows off the Smile for Joel wristband during a trip to Norway



Singer Jennifer Hudson, who acquired a wristband as a guest on This Morning



Dawn French, who was also a guest on the show, and was given a wristband

Football heroes unite in tribute to terror victims

Report by David Banner

FOOTBALL fans had the chance to dine with some of the greats, who gathered to raise funds for the Smile for Joel charity.

Walsall, Wolves and West Brom legends agreed to take part in the fundraiser for the charity founded in memory of terror victims Joel Richards, aged 19, his grandfather Patrick Evans, both from Wednesbury and his uncle Adrian Evans of Bilston.

Patrick would have turned 80 on Saturday while Adrian would have been 51 on the day of the event.

The family were all killed in the massacre at the holiday resort of Sousse, Tunisia, in 2015.

All three were devoted Saddlers fans, and the Dining with Legends event was held at the Banks's Stadium. Steve Daley, John Richards, Kenny Hibbitt, Don Goodman and Mel Eves were among those who turned out to support the charity which supports families hit by murder and terrorism.

Mourned

The charity has been set up by Joel's brother Owen, who survived the attack at the age of 16, and their mother Suzy.

Speaking at the event, Suzy said: "My dad would have been in his element. It makes me feel guilty being here, knowing they would have loved to be."

The football community also mourned the loss of referee Joel, who was on his way to enjoying a big future in the game.

Speaking proudly, Suzy said: "There have been so many tributes from the FA for Joel." These include The Joel Richards Legacy Fund, set up to support young players, referees and coaches.

The fundraiser was held shortly after the conclusion of a six-week inquest at London's Royal Courts of Justice on the slaughter, where the coroner ruled all 30 holidaymakers were unlawfully



Footballing elite, past and present, at the event. Back from left, Steve Daley, Chris Marsh, Kenny Hibbitt, Kenny Mower, Joe Mayo, Ally Robertson, Matt Murray, Don Goodman, Ray Graydon, Gordon Cowens, Chris Nicholl, and David Kelly. Front, from left, Richard Sneekes, Neil Rioch, Gary Shaw, Darren Wrack, Owen Richards and Suzy Richards, Mel Eves, John Richards, Geoff Horsfield, and Tony 'Bomber' Brown



Walsall fans, Patrick, Joel and Adrian

killed, but did not conclude 'neglect' by travel companies played a part in their deaths.

Former Wolves, Walsall and Manchester City player Steve Daley, who was a guest speaker, said: "If you were ever in that position yourself, you would hope that people do the same and rally round to help you."

He praised organiser of the night, Steve Saul, who brought together all the sporting legends and around 200



Matt Murray with Don Goodman

guests. "It's a show of support and togetherness," added Steve.

Smile for Joel won more celebrity support after Suzy and Owen appeared on This Morning following the inquest ruling. Show presenters Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby were pictured wearing Smile for Joel wristbands which he shared on social media. Phillip also put out a picture of him wearing one of the wristbands in the Arctic Circle.



Wolves legend Kenny Hibbitt

Comedian and actress Dawn French and pop star and The Voice judge Jennifer Hudson were also pictured wearing the wristbands.

Another star-studded fundraiser is planned by the charity in May at Banks's Stadium, a football match featuring celebrities such as Calum Best and Shayne Ward. Tickets are available at www.eticketing.co.uk/walsallfc costing £10 for adults and £5 for children

Free parking trial is to be considered by council

FREE parking could be trialled across the Dudley borough to encourage residents to visit smaller towns for shopping.

It is hoped that the plans will boost the economy in Sedgley, Halesowen, Brierley Hill, Kingswinford and Dudley town centre.

It has been recommended that if the free parking is successful, Dudley Council should consider rolling out two-hour free parking in council-owned car parks across the rest of the borough too.

Opposition councillor Paul Brothwood said: "UKIP have been calling for free parking for a number of years but unfortunately the Labour and Conservatives voted down our notion."

"I think the trial, which will hopefully result in free parking, will benefit local businesses, which have had a difficult time."

"We have to get people back in our towns and free parking is a catalyst for that. We want to get shoppers back to our great towns and free parking is a good idea to start with."

Council officers are putting a report together on the issue.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We are currently exploring plans for a free parking pilot in Dudley borough following a motion at full council. We will have more details over the coming weeks once discussions have taken place with members."

A decision will be made in the coming weeks.

Doctor is in court on assault charges

A DOCTOR has appeared in court charged with sexually assaulting five patients.

Dr Amirul Haque, aged 32, is alleged to have committed five sexual assaults while working at a surgery in Dudley early last year. Some of the alleged victims were said to be women who had gone for check-ups over sore throats and earaches.

Haque, of Ladypool Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, did not indicate pleas to the charges against him during a brief appearance at Walsall Magistrates' Court.

But his solicitor told the court that his client intended to deny the offences at a further hearing. Magistrates granted Haque conditional bail to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 29.

Driver cut free from wreckage of his car

A DRIVER had to be cut from his car by emergency services and taken to hospital after a crash involving two vehicles on Dudley Road in Rowley Regis at 8.30am on Thursday. The roof of the car was removed and the man taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

BT launches major recruitment drive

MORE than two dozen apprentices are being recruited by BT at sites across the West Midlands, including at its broadband hub in Walsall. It is part of a nationwide recruitment campaign for 1,700 apprentices and graduates as the telecoms giant builds what it calls 'tech literacy' in its workforce, which now includes mobile phone firm EE. BT is creating about 26 new apprenticeship jobs in the West Midlands, covering a variety of roles, from customer service, to vehicle maintenance, finance and cyber security.

61 new homes for Quarry Bank site

MORE than 60 homes have been approved by planners at Quarry Bank. Two and three-storey apartment blocks will be built at Rose Hill. A total of 42 homes will be built under the plans together with 21 apartments which will be located in three separate blocks. Councillor Jackie Cowell, chairwoman of the development control committee, said: "Housing is something that we are in desperate need of across the borough. The site may not be ideal in some senses but we hope that any issues arising can be resolved."

It's laughter yoga for Red Nose Day

LAUGHTER yoga in aid of Red Nose Day will take place at Dudley Leisure Centre on March 24. The classes combine laughter exercises combined with deep breathing. The sessions will take place on Dudley Leisure Centre on Wellington Road and will last for 45 minutes, with the first session running from noon and the second from 1pm. Those taking part are advised to wear loose, comfortable clothing. For more information call 07565218567.

Westley buys metal castings firm Meighs

THE Cradley Heath-based Westley Group has bought a Stoke-on-Trent metal castings manufacturer from its United States owner. Meighs Castings was purchased in January from MetalTek International for an undisclosed sum. Westley said the business had a heritage very similar to its Spunalloys operation in Cradley Heath and Westleys in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The group will continue to operate Meighs from its current base in Campbell Road.

Black Country images

AN exhibition of Black Country photographs is being staged at Himley Hall. A Time It Was features the work of Dudley-born newspaper photographer Phil Loach over four decades. It will be open Tuesday to Sunday 2pm to 5pm during April and May (until June 11) with free admission.

Council to debate issue of leisure centres axe

A PETITION opposing closure of three leisure centres in Dudley borough has reached its deadline, after being signed more than 4,000 times. Campaigners to save the existing centres – in Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen – said that they would push for a full council debate on the matter. Dudley Council wants to demolish Halesowen Leisure Centre, Dudley Leisure Centre and Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge, and replace them with two new centres, probably in Dudley and Lye. The council say this will save money as the older centres will be expensive to update. Development boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said it was likely to be three years before the plans came to fruition.

After gaining 4,491 signatures, former councillor and head of the Save Our Leisure Centres group, Tracy Wood said: "Quite a few councillors have pledged their support. People from the community are finally having their voice heard." The council will debate the issue in a full council meeting. A feasibility study is under way and a public consultation will follow. Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Is leisure provision in Halesowen an option? Absolutely." But he hit back at critics from the opposition Conservative group, adding: "What you can't do is argue one week for reduced council tax and then argue the next week for additional leisure provision."

Bull gets new look for a good cause

VISITORS to Birmingham's Bullring shopping centre next week will notice the iconic Bull statue donning a new heart-themed outfit, created by fashion students at Birmingham City University.

First-year fashion design students were tasked with creating a costume for the six-tonne Bull sculpture by Little Hearts Matter, Bullring's charity of the year.

Little Hearts Matter is a national UK charity offering help to those affected by the diagnosis of a single ventricle heart condition. From initial diagnosis, through treatments and into life at home, the Birmingham-based charity works with families to help when a child is diagnosed with half a working heart.

Mayor sharing diabetes advice

THE Mayor of Dudley met fellow type two diabetes sufferers at an event in Wolverhampton. Councillor Mohammed Hanif shared his experiences at the X-PERT education programme at Molineux.

New Aldi store set to create 40 jobs



Aldi is coming to Kingswinford this year

A FORMER DIY shop in Kingswinford that has stood derelict for three years will be turned into an Aldi supermarket. Council planners have given the green light for the budget chain to convert the Focus DIY store, in Dudley Road, into its latest store in the Black Country. Residents have been calling for action over the boarded-up and run-down property, a site which has also been occupied by travellers. It was announced that the popular German-owned chain wanted to take over the site at the end of last year and an exhibition held in Kingswinford met with a positive response. The proposals will see the store building converted and the car park upgraded to provide more than 100 spaces. The former garden centre area will also be converted into parking. The supermarket will cover 1,350 square metres. It is expected to create around 40 full-time and part-time jobs. A planning spokesperson said: "As part of improved access arrangements there will be a new right turn into the site and a new parking area." Councillor Paul Bradley said: "I think this is an ideal place to have a supermarket."

Aldi stated: "The Aldi 'deep discount' retail store provides an amenity to the local area, which is currently lacking, along with the creation of jobs both now and at a later date. Aldi looks forward to becoming a considerate neighbour and part of the local community." Aldi has opened several new stores in the Black Country recently, including in Oldbury and on the site of the former King Arthur pub in Dudley.

Year-long roadworks get under way within weeks

A YEAR-LONG roadworks scheme to improve a busy Black Country route is set to get under way within weeks.

Pensnett High Street, Dudley, will be widened and pedestrian crossings installed as part of the £5 million scheme aimed at cutting congestion. The project is set to cause major disruption on the road, which is used by 30,000 vehicles a day, but highways bosses said once complete the changes would hugely benefit both drivers and pedestrians. Council chiefs said work was expected to start during April or May and that a traffic management system during the scheme was still being finalised.

The road is a vital artery of the Black Country and carries a huge volume of traffic, serving the Pensnett Trading Estate – the largest secured trading estate in Europe – as well as Russells Hall Hospital.

The scheme will see the road widened into two lanes in both directions and new traffic lights installed. It is hoped that the improvements will also aid bus journeys and make services often delayed by traffic more reliable.

Compulsory

Businesses and residents have been relocated to allow the work to take place after a compulsory purchase order on land was signed off by the Transport Secretary.

Pensnett councillor John Martin said work to improve High Street was long overdue.

He explained: "High Street carries a huge amount of traffic and there are long delays. It is very difficult for pedestrians to negotiate the crossing over High Street and Pensnett Road. Pedestrians often have to take their life in their hands to cross the road."

He welcomed the improvements, adding: "It should calm things down and make it safer."

New traffic lights will be installed at the junction of High Street and Tansey Green Road, and the junction of High Street and High Oak. A pedestrian crossing will go in at High Oak and Tansey Green Road.

Councillor Martin said it was important traffic was kept moving during the works and appealed for patience from motorists. He said: "Connectivity between Pensnett Trading Estate and the motorway is absolutely crucial. We are very proud of the trading estate and want to make sure it is attractive to businesses."

Simon says Dudley's got talent!



Cowell lookalikes Andy Monk and Andy Penfold give The Fizzogs' dancing grannies the thumbs up

A CELEBRITY bash was brought to Dudley as not one but two Simon Cowell look-a-likes joined forces with comedy trio The Fizzogs in aid of Comic Relief.

Shoppers were urged to dance along with TV's Mr Nasty and his pals as a special video was shot in the town centre.

Dancing grannies The Fizzogs – Sue Hawkins, Jacky Fellows and Deb Nicholls – joined forces with Simon impersonators Andy

Monk and Andy Penfold as part of a unique version of the song Simon Says.

Deb explained: "We were asked if we would like to be involved, so we jumped at the chance. There were the two Simon Cowells and then us dancing along."

"The plan is for a Comic Relief video to a pop song that is a bit like Simon Says but with the lyrics re-written."

"The people behind the Black

Country Festival filmed it and will submit it to the TV show. Who knows, it may even be sent to Simon himself!"

Deb continued: "The great thing was that everyone got involved in it despite the horrible weather. So many people stopped and came over to say hello. The two Andys are such good sports."

"We even popped into one of the pubs to see if any karaoke was on as that would have been brilliant."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



WANTED: School-run parents top crime list

I'VE never been to the borough of Havering, east London, but it sounds like a jolly good place to live.

While the rest of Britain struggles with anti-social behaviour and reduced policing budgets, it seems that Havering is doing rather well.

Indeed, crime is obviously so low, and the police and council coffers so awash with cash, that they have decided to crackdown on the No. 1 law-and-order issue in the borough: stopping parents from taking their kids to school by car.

No, not just parents parking on double yellow lines or causing an obstruction. All parents. Even the ones who take great care not to inconvenience others.

The local authority has declared "exclusion zones" around four primary schools in the borough, which will be patrolled by CCTV cameras to catch any parents dropping their children off in the vicinity of the school.

Police officers, traffic wardens and PCSOs will also be asked to keep an eye out, lest any crafty parents manage to give the cameras the slip. Letters have been sent out warning parents they risk a £1,000 fine and criminal record if they do the school run. Talk of a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Now you might not be too concerned about what happens in east London, but it's amazing how this sort of lunacy can gain traction once the PC mob gets behind it. Don't be surprised if it reaches the Black Country a few years down the line.

Of course, at this point, somebody usually chips in "how would you like it if somebody blocked your driveway," and the answer is, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't.

But causing an obstruction is illegal anyway, and I'm sure nobody would object to the Boys in Blue or the council dealing with that. But for people who drive and park their cars responsibly, why is it anybody else's business how they take their kids to school?

No doubt there are some people who just don't like having other people's cars outside their homes at all, even if they are correctly parked. But that, I'm afraid, is what happens when you buy a house opposite a school. So you don't have to drive your children to school.

Of course, there are also the fanatics who believe the school run really is a crime, and love nothing more than local government flexing its muscles to "change people's behaviour." People who have no idea about the reality of being allocated a school two miles from where they live, and then having to drive another 10 miles to be in work for 8.30.

Incidentally, the orders have been brought in using a Public Spaces Protection Order Act, introduced by David Cameron's government to tackle serious crime such as drug dealing. I wonder how Mr Cameron's kids get to school.

As Churchill would have said, the vote was won



Prof Armand Leroi claims The Beatles weren't great influence on pop music



Roy Hattersley –comparison between Brexit and Henry VIII's Reformation



Winston Churchill – one vote can be sufficient to secure a majority

‘Tyranny’ – how can they justify slogan?

A NEW slogan – straight out of fairyland – has been coined by those disgruntled politicians who opposed, and still do so, the prospect of the UK pulling out of the European Union. It is: "The tyranny of the majority." Call me obtuse, or whatever you like, but I cannot for the life of me see how this mantra can be justified. A referendum was held and it was won by the Brexiteers. And as Sir Winston Churchill once said, if one vote will secure you a majority, then that is sufficient.

MEANWHILE, on the Sunday programme (Radio 4) Roy Hattersley made a neat comparison between Brexit and Henry VIII's Reformation nearly 500 years ago. He recalls that King Henry was irritated by the Pope, dissatisfied with the deal he was getting from Europe and was ruling over an insular race who 'consider ourselves better on our own'.

AND while so many commentators bang on about 'toxic Corbyn', few of them highlight the quiet appeal of Theresa May. She voted to stay in the EU but is now pushing ahead with Brexit because that is what the people wanted. You don't often meet a politician like that and I suspect the Tories under May won a by-election at Copeland that the Tories under Cameron would have lost.

IN a column for Waitrose magazine, John Humphrys refers to a 'hilarious exchange' between President Trump and Humphrys' old BBC colleague Jon Sopel. In truth, it was not so much hilarious as shot through with cold contempt on both sides. Sopel and Trump clearly have no time for each other.

SOMEBODY opens the wrong envelope in Hollywood and it dominates the world's TV, radio, newspapers and internet for the next two days. No, I don't get it either.

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



PROFESSOR Armand Leroi is the evolutionary expert who claims The Beatles were not a great influence on pop music. He may well be right. The Fab Four were mould-breaking and magical, yet they were not widely imitated. But so what? Diamonds do not influence rubies but that doesn't make diamonds any less brilliant.

MEANWHILE, if you're old enough, cherish the memories. Professor Leroi is 52 so he could never have known that first semi-spiritual encounter with Sergeant Pepper, or the opening chords of Strawberry Fields Forever. We Sixties kids were transfixed by the genius of The Beatles who took us on a brief but unforgettable journey from Love Me Do to Let It Be. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, yeah, yeah, yeah.

BY coincidence, on the day this week that Tunisian police were accused of cowardice during the Sousse attack which left 38 people dead, our own anti-terror cops were on exercise at the Merry Hill shopping centre near Dudley. What a contrast. In Tunisia, a rag-bag assortment of fainters and panickers took as long as possible to get to the scene. In England, a tough, disciplined squad toolled up like Robocop seemed utterly fearless in the face of the enemy. Or so we would like to think.

A READER wondered why the NHS paid more for paracetamol than the rest of us pay in supermarkets, so he wrote to the Department of Health. Here's part of the department's reply: "Comparison of the margin found in the margin

survey with the agreed target margin as part of the contractual framework determines whether there need to be any adjustments to payments made to community pharmacies." Sir Humphrey is alive and well.

"SURE, I know there are bigger issues, but microaggressions are a reality of the everyday existence of many people of colour." That anonymous email by a Cambridge student allegedly offended by "cultural misrepresentations" on his college menu, including Jamaican stew and Tunisian rice, will surely be recorded in the official history of the Snowflake Generation. How blissful your life must be if you have time to take offence at stew being mislabelled by the dinner ladies.

ONE account of this spat tells us that some students responded "with humour," including the one who texted: "Don't get me started on the Yorkshire puddings." But how can we be sure it is humour? For all we know, some Snowflake undergraduate from Harrogate could genuinely be sobbing him/her/gender-neutral self to sleep every night at the wicked misrepresentation of his county's delicacy. We live in fragile times.

INCIDENTALLY, the Cambridge college in question is Pembroke. How long before the Welsh take up arms over this geographical misappropriation of one of their towns?

MEANWHILE, back in cyberspace. . . . A reader tells me how his internet provider locked his account when he failed to change his password. And why did he fail to do so? Because the company's emails instructing him to change the password had all been dumped in his spam basket, by the company's own software. First, we put our letters in your bin. Then we punish you for not reading them.

TALKING POINT



I'd like to Believe in Better from advertisers

EVERY day, I'm being followed by someone, and it's getting a bit tedious. No, it's not through social media or, thankfully, in the street. The person I'm talking about is called Winston, as in the wartime prime minister whose voice is so closely linked with the principles of defiance you feel like standing to attention whenever one of his speeches is featured on TV or radio.

My 'stalker' answers to the surname Wolfe. . . . the character who pops up in adverts putting the fear of God into everyone but who turns out to be a goody two-shoes. Trouble is, he's not really welcome in my world, as I just cannot get some of his spoken lines out of my head. "So, you're a landlord now; a property magnate" is permanently lodged in my brain.

In music terms, they're known as earworms: melodies and lyrics which can float away into the ether as quickly as they infiltrated your conscience. In the advertising world, they're obviously designed to catch the attention of the viewer or listener in the shortest time possible, and they're an absolute menace. And there is an array of catchphrases that could give Wolfe a run for his money.

Take, for instance, "For The Journey", "Play Makes It Possible", "Because You're Worth It", "Believe In Better", any one of which could be swirling around in your head right now.

It's not that these lack wit or imagination. Quite the contrary. Try these for size: "It Does Exactly What It Says On The Tin", "Every Little Helps", "I'm Lovin' It". All can be heard in all kinds of places up and down the country every day, having become convenient ways of saying something in just a few words.

Mind you, even in Adland, there can be some moments of confusion. On the radio, the line "You Do The Maths" rounds off its advert with a phrase which needs no explanation. But in the television version, it's . . . nowhere to be heard. The effect is like falling off the end of a supermarket conveyor belt.

Which brings me back to Winston Wolfe and that poor chap who just wants to get on with his decorating. Anyone with a keen ear for voices will have noticed that Mr Wolfe's "victim" sounds nothing like the bloke in the radio version. "It's just my wife's old flat," the DIY-er warbles, confirming the characters are one and the same, even if played by different actors.

It's enough to make anyone ring up a painter and decorator to get the job done quick without the tough-guy interruptions. But does any of this really matter? Perhaps when all of this gimmickry has run its course, there might be a return to those halcyon days when the likes of "Put a tiger in your tank", "The appliance of science" and "It's good to talk" were expressions that summed up an emotion ahead of the capabilities of the merchandise being promoted.

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Shameful proposals to cut leisure centres

HOW the Labour councillors justify their proposals to cut leisure centres is downright shameful. Councillor Khurshid Ahmed tells us that the latest shock is that the centres are losing money. My question would be 'where are the figures for investment over the last 10 years?'
The budget for advertising and promoting the centres is zero. The Halesowen Leisure Centre Customer Forum was told this ages ago. Whenever Labour shut down and cut they beat out the same old story and that is that everybody is losing money.

Councillor Ahmed tells us that leisure centres have a life span of 30 years but perhaps he should visit Dulwich where the leisure centre opened in 1892. It was refurbished in 2010 and is still going strong.
Or perhaps Buckingham Palace should never have been awarded £350-plus millions for rewiring and other improvements when really the building is too old.
The key is obviously investment and political will.
The councillor tells us if the proposals to shut three leisure centres and re-

place them with two goes ahead, then they'll have regular maintenance. This should already have been done for the leisure centres we have.
Finally, he says before the leisure centres will be closed then 'it will be years away and only after full consultation'. Is this meant to placate us? As for consultation, we are well aware in Halesowen of what this means. We were 'consulted' over the proposed closure of Hayley Green Hospital and despite massive opposition, it was closed.
CHAZ STOLL
Halesowen

Watch out for bus lane booby trap

I FULLY sympathise with the reader who was caught out by a bus lane on leaving Railway Drive in Wolverhampton.
This happened to me recently on turning into Pipers Row after a delayed train journey from London.
The time was 2am!

I had made exactly the same manoeuvre some months prior without being caught so can only assume Pipers Row had been designated bus lane status since.
I challenged the notice claiming that buses were not running at 2am in the morning!

This was dismissed by Wolverhampton Penalty Charge Services, stating that bus lane enforcement applied 24 hours. Logical or what?

Wolverhampton is fast becoming a bus lane booby trap for unsuspecting motorists, so enter at your peril!

ADRIAN DRING
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Council's bad move over town museum

SO Councillor Khurshid Ahmed is very proud that Dudley's fountain has been named as the winner of the Victorian Society's Birmingham and West Midlands Conservation Award.

What he should be ashamed of, on the other hand, is the fact that he and the rest of the council allowed the closure of Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

The museum having gone from the centre of Dudley, is a very great loss to the town. Whoever thinks it is better to travel a mile out of town to see, and not all of, the wonderful items that were displayed in the beautiful building in Priory Street and St James's Road?

Access to the Archive building is not ideal and parking can be a headache.

MRS L SHELTON
Dudley

Lowest of the low in church raid

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Christ Church in Coseley was broken into, a sanctified building was ransacked and all the money and valuables taken by the lowest of the low.

The silver candlesticks and vases were not decoration but memories of families and friends of the congregation.

I am sure the clergy and members of the church will be praying not just for the return of the valuables and the memories but, for the forgiveness of those who have caused the damage.

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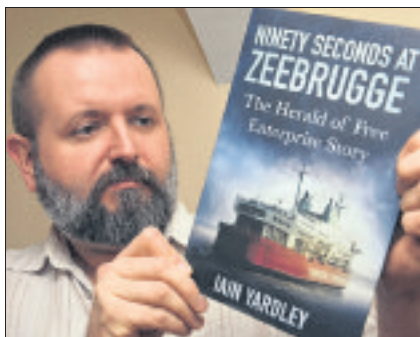
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Memories remain of ferry disaster



Iain Yardley, from Dudley, interviewed survivors for his book

ANDY Bridge was settling down in the bar on the ferry home, sat opposite his friend Lawson Fisher. Part of a group of seven teenagers who regularly drank at a pub in Stourbridge, they were relaxing as they prepared to return from a day-trip to the Belgian port of Zeebrugge.

Seconds later, he would see something that would remain with him for the rest of his life.

As the ship capsized, he watched a young woman plunge from one end of the boat to the other, knocking his glasses off seconds before crashing through a window to an almost certain death in the icy waters.

"She was a very smartly dressed lady in a herringbone suite, probably aged in her mid-to-late 20s, and she fell the whole width of the boat backwards through a window below," said Andy, then 19 and living at Clent.

It was 30 years on Monday, March 6, since the car ferry MS Herald of Free Enterprise capsized minutes after leaving the harbour at Zeebrugge.

A total of 193 passengers and crew perished in the freezing waters of the North Sea.

And while the majority of the 539 people on board survived due to the heroic efforts of the rescue services, the figure does not reflect the number of lives torn apart by the disaster.

Sue Hames watched helplessly as her boyfriend Rob Heard was swept away after losing his grip on

MARK ANDREWS on the Zeebrugge disaster 30 years ago, which resulted in 193 deaths

a table. Soldier Brian Bunker saved several lives after refusing to be evacuated from the wreckage, only to discover that his wife Diane and baby daughter Nadine had been killed.

Ninety seconds was all it took for the Herald to capsize. From normality to unimaginable horror in less than the time it takes to boil a kettle.

This instantaneous nature of the disaster is captured by Black Country author Iain Yardley, who spoke to about 30 survivors over a seven-year period while researching his poignant book *Ninety Seconds at Zeebrugge*.

Iain, 44, from Lower Gornal, admits to feeling some guilt as he spoke to the survivors.

"Listening to and reading stories of what survivors and relatives went through was very difficult," he says. "I thought to myself 'who am I to intrude on their grief?' However, I feel that the people I spoke to wanted to tell their story. It was very difficult for them. I still feel very honoured and humbled."

Three people from the West Midlands lost their lives: Mr Heard, from Coventry, 66-year-old Ivy Jackson from Burton-upon-Trent, and 42-year-old lorry driver Tom Peach, from Rugeley.

Mr Peach, who lived in Speechly Drive, was on his way back from a delivery job in Germany. He had only been working for Garmans Transport in Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, for three weeks, after two years on the dole.

A friend said that he had been "over the moon" at finally landing a job.

The Herald had been due to depart at 7pm local time, but was five minutes late. At 7.24pm it passed the outer walls of the harbour, and four minutes later it capsized.

Andy Bridge's party was made up of Lawson Fisher, 16, from Stourbridge, brothers Ian and Nick Wood, also from Stourbridge, Andrew Dingley from nearby Hagley, Ian Moore, 18 of Netherton, Dudley, and Alan Cartwright, of Brierley Hill.

Vanished

Andy, now 49, remembers how Lawson quickly vanished, moments after being sat opposite him.

"I didn't see him until we got back to the hotel later," he says. "I was hanging onto the chair and the water came up to my waist, were were in complete darkness and it was very cold. I just held on."

Only a sandbank prevented the ship from sinking completely, and the drama happened so quickly there was no opportunity for Captain David Lewry to send out a distress signal.

Luckily, there was a dredger, Sandaras, working nearby, and noticing that all the Herald's lights had gone out, its captain alerted the port authority at Zeebrugge. Tugs were dispatched to surround the stricken ferry and a team of divers arrived by helicopter within 30 minutes. The Belgian Navy, on exercise in the area, also joined



Andy Bridge, originally from Clent, survived the disaster

in the rescue. Andy Bridge says: "They threw down rope ladders, but it was too cold for me to climb one. Someone came down and got me."

There were thought to be a total of 459 passengers and 80 crew members on board at the time.

Townsend Thoresen was then one of the biggest operators in the highly lucrative cross-channel ferry industry, and the Herald and its sister ships were crucial to that success.

However, it seems that the pressure to stay ahead in the race across the channel led to a culture of corner-cutting in the company. It had become customary for Townsend Thoresen ships to depart with the bow doors still open, allowing vehicle fumes to escape

the deck. These were normally shut just before the ship left the calm waters of the harbour.

Failed

However, assistant bosun Mark Stanley - exhausted after a grueling shift - overslept and failed to hear the call to report for duty.

The company management was accused of presiding over a "culture of sloppiness".

Judge Sheen's inquiry led to captain David Lewry being suspended for 12 months, and chief officer Sabel for two years, but corporate manslaughter proceedings against the company failed. By the time of the disaster, Townsend Thoresen had just been taken over by P & O, leading to the fleet being hurriedly rebranded.

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Car vandals slash tyres and smashing mirrors



Resident David Hammonds views the damage done to his car during the wrecking spree by vandals

VANDALS have left the residents of a Black Country street fuming after a car wrecking spree.

Police have received several reports of cars being damaged in Stourbridge.

Tyres have been slashed and wing mirrors knocked off in and around Wheeler Street and the town's Old Quarter.

Tracey Blackman, a resident on Wheeler Street, where many cars have been damaged, said residents were

furiously. Her husband Joe's cars were targeted by the vandals.

The 33-year-old teaching assistant added: "It all seemed to happen over the space of one night, the majority of the cars in the street had their wing mirrors broken.

Worst

"We've had a few instances where something like this has happened before but this is the worst it's ever been.

"Two tyres on my husband's car were slashed just after Christmas and my car had its wing mirror ripped off.

"Every one is angry, it's frustrating. I haven't been able to drive because I don't have a wing mirror."

She added: "There seems to be a lot of streets around the area complaining about the vandalism.

"Our street is one-way well-lit road which is completely residential so it's come as a surprise."

A spokesman for West Midlands Police said: "We are urging anyone who has had their car damaged to report it.

"Patrols have been stepped up in the area and witnesses are urged to call 101."



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New committee will focus on tackling anti-social behaviour

COUNCIL leaders will set up a new committee aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour, which they say is 'on the rise' across Dudley borough.

The focus will be on 'nuisance neighbours' and anti-social behaviour in residential neighbourhoods. The panel will hear first-hand accounts from police officers and the council's anti-social behaviour team.

Councillor Dean Perks, who will chair the committee, said its aim was to improve the council's approach of tackling the issue and to improve co-operation with police.

Low-down on high rises at meeting

DUDLEY Council tenants who live in high rise properties are invited to discuss issues relating to their estates at a dedicated meeting this month.

The council says that it actively supports and encourages its tenants and leaseholders to become involved in the running of their high rise blocks.

The High Rise Living Forum meets on a regular basis and is part of the council's Love Your Community campaign to engage and consult with residents about what matters to them.

The group discusses many issues relating to living within a high rise block and considers improvements.

The next meeting is set for Thursday, March 16, at the Saltwells Education Centre in Netherton, from 7pm until 8.30pm. Tea and coffee will be served from 6.30pm.

Anyone who wishes to attend should call (01384) 815168 to ensure it is still taking place, as it forum dates are sometimes subject to change.

Better

"We will be focusing more around nuisances neighbours and neighbourhoods. We want to make Dudley a better place for residents to live."

The move has been welcomed by Dudley Council's leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, who felt the committee could prove 'effective' in tackling anti-social behaviour.

"I am happy that we can work in partnership with the police and other agencies to make sure we are as committed as possible to tackling anti-social behaviour," he said.

Committee members will hear from police officers, community leaders, from the council's anti-social behaviour team and councillors.

Councillor Perks said: "The idea will be to collect information and then we will make recommendations."

The first committee meeting will take place on March 28.

Awards for life-saving blood donors



Donors, from left, Lorraine James, John Mould, Alexa Walker, David Bean, David Bailey, Jackie Banks, Martin Baker

BLACK Country blood donors who have potentially saved the lives of up to 3,000 people have been honoured by the NHS.

The donors, who are from the Dudley and Sandwell boroughs, have collectively donated 973 units of blood over their lifetimes.

Their lifesaving efforts were recognised at a ceremony held at Aston Villa Football Club where they were

presented with medals. The donors joined 38 others from across the West Midlands, where each person had donated on at least 100 occasions.

Teenager

John Mould, aged 65 from Amblecote, received blood at the age of 13, and since then has donated blood for the past 47 years.

He said: "Giving blood takes so little

time but helps so many. Blood donors helped me as a teenager."

Jackie Banks, 53, from Sedgley has been donating blood since she was 18.

She said: "As we get older we never know what might happen. Ourselves or our families may need blood one day."

Other local donors included Lorraine James, 78, from Brierley Hill, and Martin Baker, 67, of Brierley Hill.

Better access for visitors in wheelchairs

NEW portable ramps will allow wheelchair users to access every station along the Severn Valley Railway.

The Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust received a £75,000 grant from the Department of Transport last year, which will go towards making the railway and its stations more accessible for all.

Lesley Carr, spokeswoman for Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust, said: "It's part of a much bigger project. We put in a bid to better what we're doing for disabled access for people."

"We've already got six or so disabled cars, but what we wanted to do as part of this project is to convert an unused carriage to become a wheelchair accessible carriage that will join the fleet next year."

"Another part of the project is that we're going to create a wheelchair accessible dining car, which will be the jewel in the crown but that work won't start until the other one is finished."

"As part of the bid for the grant we would like to replace the ageing collection of wheelchair ramps."

"We have ordered seven now so all wheelchair accessible carriages will have portable ramps with them."

"The overall project is we want every single train that we run to be accessible to wheelchair users."

Grant to help college students' relaxation

HALESOWEN College has received £9,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to enhance its Trim Trail to highlight mental health awareness.

The college is planning the new facility which could include a sensory garden and benches.

The area would be available for students and staff to sit and take time out for their health and wellbeing. The trail will open in Mental Health Awareness week from May 8.

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Constructing a bright future for apprentices

THIS image is a first look inside of the new £12m Advance II construction centre at Dudley College.

Now nearing the final months of completion it shows the inside of the towering steel-framed structure taking shape in Priory Road.

The building work is set to be completed by June and the centre has already secured 80 apprentices.

It will be the first of its kind specialising in the latest construction techniques, technology and off-site fabrication.

Describing the new centre as a 'once in a generation project', Dudley College principal Lowell Williams said: "This is ground-breaking innovation that we are at the forefront of. We need to train people who are working in construction as if they are digital engineers."

"We will be the first building in the country offering that on a large scale using brand new apprentice standards."

Funded

"It is also the biggest skills project that the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have funded."

The new 37,000 square feet building will include workshops, classrooms and support facilities around a four-storey building called The Hanger.

There will also be a digital centre and other facilities include a carbon-friendly technology centre.

Mr Williams continued: "We have had a lot of support to make this happen. This is a once in a lifetime project for the Black Country."

"We currently have a 3D map of the site. You can go into the control room and put on a helmet and look around it as you were in and peel away the layers. It really is like something out of a sci-fi movie."

"As the construction industry mod-



Inside the new £12m Advance II construction centre at Dudley College

ernise's it will create many more manufacturing jobs. This is a real opportunity. We have already secured about 80 apprentices."

At the start of this year, it was also revealed that the college were going to be at the forefront of the new Dudley Academies Trust.

They will plough about half a million pounds into the trust to kick start the process of bringing together Castle High School, Hillcrest School and Community College, Holly Hall Academy and High Areal School, so

that they can to share resources and expertise.

After a recent visit Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "It's brilliant to see the new Advance II, the college's new Centre for Advanced Building Technologies being built. I've worked hard to support Lowell Williams and his brilliant work at Dudley College which has transformed the town with fantastic new facilities, bringing thousands of students to Dudley, boosting the town centre and strengthening our economy."

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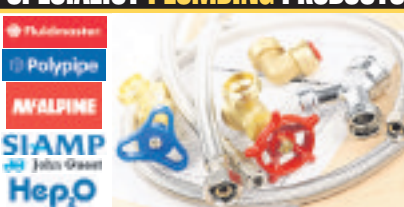
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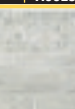
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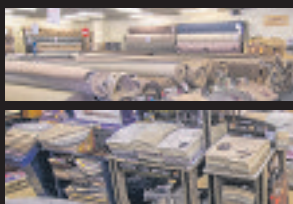
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Concern over bed blocking problem on hospital wards

BED blocking has reached an 'all-time high' at Russells Hall Hospital with more than 150 patients ready to be discharged taking up beds on the wards.

Health chiefs said the number of medically-fit patients unable to be shifted was 'unacceptable'. It comes during a winter when the hospital has been struggling to cope with 'unprecedented' pressure on A&E.

Russells Hall has been unable to discharge dozens of patients, who are either waiting to go home or to be moved into social care, meaning beds are not being freed up for people who need them. Hospital bosses said the situation was a major problem.

Woman's body found after blaze in alley

A WOMAN was found dead after a fire in an entrance way between terraced houses in Cradley Heath.

West Midlands Police said that the body of a woman was found on Saturday in the alley, which leads to the side door of a home in Clyde Street.

The victim is believed to be a woman who was aged in her 30s.

The death was not being treated as suspicious.

Two fire crews from Haden Cross and one from Oldbury fire stations attended the fire at 12.05pm.

Station Commander Dean Harris confirmed: "Unfortunately the fire resulted in fatal injuries".

Neighbour Michael Morgan said: "My thoughts are with all of her family."

Sandwell's Cradley Heath and Old Hill councillor Caroline White said: "It's devastating to hear and its awful news for the family, my thoughts are with them."

waiting to go home or to be moved into social care, meaning beds are not being freed up for people who need them. Hospital bosses said the situation was a major problem.

The number of people no longer needing to be in hospital has shot up since Christmas with the most up-to-date total being 154.

The hospital has struggled to free beds throughout the winter.

At the end of January the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, said 682 out of 723 beds were full, more than the 85 per cent which NHS safety guidelines state should be the maximum.

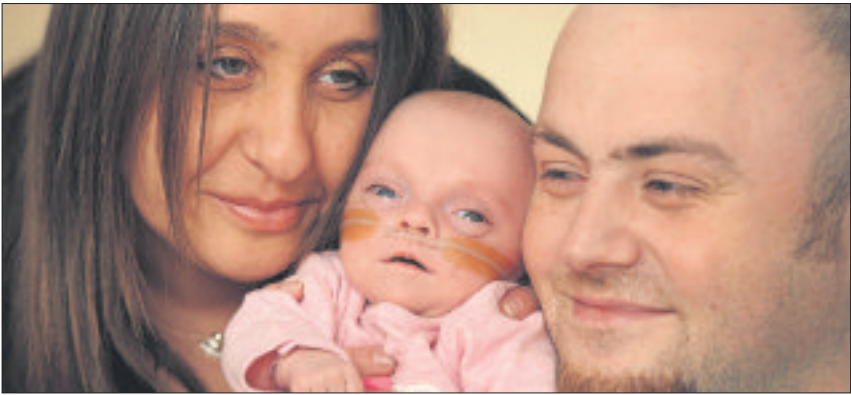
Warning

Record numbers have been filing into the A&E at the Dudley hospital, which prompted a warning before Christmas for people only to come in if they had a serious condition.

Paul Bytheway, chief operating officer at the Dudley Group NHS Trust, said: "The number of delayed transfers of care continues to be a challenge for the trust, with the number of patients who are medically fit to leave hospital but unable to do so at an all-time high."

"This is due to the well-documented pressure across the whole health and social care system and an increase in the number of patients with complex needs who need ongoing support after discharge."

28 weeks premature Savannah comes home



Little battler Savannah Payne-Cooper with parents Claire and Robert at home in Netherton after arriving 28 weeks early

A COUPLE are celebrating having their baby home to Netherton after she was born 28 weeks premature and doctors had warned she may not survive.

Savannah Payne-Cooper was born on November 1, 2016, months before her due date, weighing just one pound five ounces.

After being told by doctors during a check-up that their baby was not developing as normal, Claire Payne-Cooper, a 34-year-old family support worker, and her 35-year-old husband

Robert, a retail supervisor, were dealt another blow when told there was a high likelihood they could lose their baby.

However, little Savannah beat the odds and, despite still needing oxygen, she is now weighing four pounds and back at home in Lyndale Road, with her loving parents.

Claire said: "When we were told by a doctor that she may not make it, it absolutely destroyed us."

"When the doctors told us that she was in good health despite her size, it

was an unbelievable feeling, we were delighted. She is back home now and it is wonderful to have her here. We were in hospital for 11 weeks, she came out just four days before her due date. She is getting stronger all the time."

Now the couple are planning to thank doctors, nurses and staff at Russells Hall Hospital, New Cross Hospital and Birmingham Women's Hospital by raising money at a fun day organised for April 2 at Brook Street Community Centre in Tipton. They have already raised £518.

Prime time TV boost for Lye real ale

A BLACK Country-brewed ale served up on beautiful sandy beach beside the Indian Ocean.

Eagle-eyed viewers of the Sunday night ITV drama The Good Karma Hospital will have spotted bottles of Sadler's Red IPA Golden Ale Red being served up by actor Neil Morrissey, who plays barman Greg McConnell in the hit series.

It was a surprise to the Ley brewery's sales director Ian King, who had sent 24 bottles of the ale to production company Tiger Aspect last July. But he had then forgotten about the delivery - until the brewery's moment of TV fame.

He said: "I forgot all about it until the Sunday night. My partner said my phone kept ringing, I checked it and everyone was saying the beer was on TV. It was just great to see it on TV, providing us excellent exposure."

The ale, which is stocked in by ASDA supermarkets, has since seen a 50 per cent surge in sales.

The production company chose Sadler's due to its connections with hit TV series Peaky Blinders, with the brewery launching a special ale to mark that hit TV show, which is partly filmed at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley.

Mr King added: "I chose the ale because it is one which goes with Asian cuisine."

Meningitis charity at Thinktank family day

CHARITY Meningitis Now is inviting families with an experience of the illness to join it for a free Family Day at Birmingham's Thinktank.

The fun-packed day will include a private planetarium show and plenty of time to explore the science museum, taking place on Sunday, April 23. Registration for the event, aimed at children up to age 16, is now open on the charity's meningitisnow.org website.

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Visitor accolade for the canal and tunnel trust

DUDLEY Tunnel and Limestone Mines have received a accolade as part of VisitEngland's Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme.

The popular Birmingham New Road attraction received the 'Best Told Story' award.

Jeff Luesley, Chairman of Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust, which runs the attraction, said: "We are delighted to have received this accolade from VisitEngland.

Cavern

"Our regular daily 45-minute boat trips bring the history of the mines to life with on-board commentary, a music and light show in the Singing Cavern, a video show in Little Tess Cavern explaining how limestone was formed and mannequin displays in Hurst Cavern depicting miners working during the 18th century.

"It is thanks to decades of restoration and development work by the Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust that this wonder of 18th century engineering, with a history dating back 428 million years, welcomes more than 100,000 visitors a year to enjoy boat trips into the tunnel system."

At Dudley Tunnel and Limestone Mines' £3 million visitor centre, named The Portal, as well as embarking on their boat trip visitors can enjoy an interactive exhibition in the Bifa Award Gallery. They can also browse in the Trust's gift shop or enjoy waterside dining in The Gongoozler restaurant, which gets its unusual name from the word that means a person who enjoys watching activity on the canals.

The VisitEngland accolades are allocated through a scoring system based on an annual assessment.



Trust chairman Jeff Luesley showed the Princess Royal around the attraction last year

Government asked to give Dudley a fair deal

DUDLEY Council has hit out at the Government claiming that it is being unfairly treated over funding.

Councillors are officially calling for a fair deal for the town with a motion at the full council meeting.

After seeing its funding plummet by £76 million since 2010, angry councillors from the ruling Labour group declared that enough is enough and gave stark warnings about further cuts if funding levels from Westminster continue to be slashed. Opposition Conservative group leader Councillor Patrick Harley dismissed the move as political grandstanding

There were also claims that Tory strongholds in the south were not experiencing the same level of cuts.

Councillor Asif Ahmed, ward member for St James's, who brought the motion, said: "This council has done the best it possibly can with the financial resources available to it. If the Government continues in this manner we will soon be in a position where we can only provide statutory services." Council leader Pete Lowe said: "The truth is that Dudley is being subjected to much deeper cuts than elsewhere across the country."

New speed cameras on order for busy route

SPEED cameras will be installed on a notorious stretch of the Birmingham New Road within weeks following calls for action by road safety campaigners.

Highways bosses revealed cameras had been ordered and would go up on the bend near Woodcroft Avenue, on the Dudley and Tipton border, near the busy junction with Priory Road.

Speed cameras have been switched off in the Black Country for the past four years but Dudley Council has made the Birmingham New Road a special case due to persistent calls to improve safety on the route used by thousands of drivers every day.

Dudley councillor Ken Finch has been among those campaigning for measures to cut speeding and said he was delighted cameras would be coming back.

Old speed cameras remain up on the road to act as a deterrent but have been switched off since 2013.

Listening

Councillor Finch said: "It has taken a lot to get this far. This is what it is all about, trying to save lives and in my opinion this shows officers have got to start listening to councillors and people who live in these dangerous areas.

"Hopefully these speed cameras will make drivers think twice."

The 40mph Birmingham New Road was recently named among the top five roads in the Black Country where drivers had been caught speeding dur-

By Richard Guttridge

ing 2015/16. A total of 428 motorists were caught out by mobile police cameras with the fastest clocked at 92mph.

Concerns have also been aired about drivers leaving the Foxyards estate who have to pull out onto the Birmingham New Road.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said speeding on the road was a 'real problem'.

He added: "We've been working hard to improve road safety on the Birmingham New Road so I'm delighted to hear that our campaign has paid off, but credit is really due to residents who organised the petition and have been pressing the council to make these improvements.

"I think this shows what we can achieve when we work together."

Dudley Council's environment boss, Councillor Hilary Bills said: "We have ordered these speed cameras. All we are waiting for is for the company to provide them.

"They are ordered and I hope it will be very soon."

On the run for St Patrick's Day fun

ORGANISERS of the big St Patrick's Day festival and parade in Birmingham are adding a fun run to the Irish festivities in the second city.

As part of the Birmingham St Patrick's Festival and Parade on March 12, the Emerald Mile is set to start at 10am outside South and City College.

It is the first time that the run has been added to the programme of events to mark St Patrick's Day.

Supporters, including Event Signs and Motorpoint, have pledged their support to the Emerald Mile event which will see up to 250 people take on a two-mile course along the parade route to raise money for charity.

The main parade will take place along Digbeth High Street between noon and 2pm. Birmingham's St Patrick's Parade goes back to 1952 and was the first in Britain. The parade has taken place in Digbeth since 1996 and increasingly mirrors the multicultural nature of Birmingham.

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ELC closes shop at Merry Hill centre



Early Learning Centre will be available within the centre's Mothercare store after closing its dedicated shop
THE Early Learning Centre is closing down its shop at the Merry Hill shopping centre.

The shop on the upper mall of the Brierley Hill mega-mall will shut its doors for the last time on Monday, March 13. Company bosses say they 'regret' the store closure but put it down to a 'larger transformation' of their business.

The major Black Country shopping centre has also seen in recent months the closure of Sainsbury's and BHS.

ELC is owned by Mothercare, which will still run one shop at the shopping centre, located on the lower mall.

A spokesman said: "We will be emailing our customers in the local area to advise of the changes and provide details of the nearest store, Mothercare Dudley, which houses an Early Learning Centre shop in shop. We greatly value all our customers in the area and would like to thank them for their continued loyalty and support for Early Learning Centre. Whilst we regret the closure of the store, it is part of a larger transformation plan for our business."

Bosses at intu Merry Hill said they were 'sorry' to hear of the store closure but said new brands would be setting up at the site.

Fire service want mayor rather than police boss

THE West Midlands Fire Authority is set to be taken over by the region's new mayor after bosses ruled against coming under the wing of the police and crime commissioner (PCC).

The authority could also combine powers with rural services in Staffordshire and Shropshire.

A report to the West Midlands Combined Authority's board by Sandwell councillor and WMFA's chair John Edwards says merging services across the wider region could save money and improve standards.

The WMFA's committee voted unanimously to come under the governance of the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority at a meeting last week.

Budgets

Mr Edwards said the committee believed it was 'by far the best option going forward' after fears were raised that falling under the control of the region's PCC could threaten fire prevention budgets.

"We have agreed to embark on a journey that will see fire and rescue services in the West Midlands move under the governance of

the new elected mayor," he said. "There was the option of working with the police and crime commissioner, but there is a concern that our budget could be hit as a result."

"We are also committed to maintaining the neutrality of the fire service. We are humanitarian and not law enforcement, which gives us a special relationship with the public."

PCC David Jamieson has yet to indicate a preference. Mr Edwards added: "Bringing together fire services across the region is a possibility we have been looking at for some time. This is partly because our budgets have been under the cosh since 2010."

Home in on advice for building plans

COMPETITION

TODAY there are more people looking for a home in the West Midlands than there are homes to choose from.

As monthly demand rises by more than 20 per cent The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show returns with its largest exhibition ever at Birmingham's NEC from March 23-26.

The show will have more than 500 exhibitors, 16 free daily seminars and 35 masterclasses over four intense days. And not only do our readers have a chance to win a pair of tickets, with 20 pairs up for grabs, but we are also offering an amazing first prize, a set of Lithe Audio Bluetooth Ceiling Speakers & Passive Speaker Kits worth £269.99.



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Experience

The show, sponsored in Birmingham for the first time by Everest Home Improvements, a British company with over 50 years' experience in double glazed windows, conservatories, doors and more, will host over 15 resident property experts, some of whom are regular TV presenters.

They will be on hand to discuss all renovating and building queries alongside companies which will introduce their latest services and products from industries including design, architecture, financial services, kitchens, bathrooms, doors and windows, ventilation, heating, planning permission and much more.

There will be advice and guidance, and real case studies present to talk about their experiences with consumers who are facing similar challenges throughout all stages of their projects.

On Saturday, visitors will have the opportunity to hold 15-minute consultations with celebrity experts who star in their favourite TV property

programmes. Charlie Luxton, sustainable architectural designer currently presenting 'Building the Dream' on More 4, will talk about eco living, new architectural ideas and homes of the future. Julia Kendell, interior design expert for BBC's 'DIY SOS', ITV's '60 Minute Makeover' and 'Rebuild Our Home', will give inspiration to those revamping their properties.

The show's resident DIY Doctor, Mike Edwards, will be hosting demonstrations to inspire visitors to take matters into their own hands and address some of the key aspects of their projects without the help of a contractor.

He will prepare tutorials on topics from installing insulation to coating walls, which will help transform a home into a better place to live and encourage both men and women to roll up their sleeves, which will ultimately save time and money. For self-builders the Advice Centre is a hub for impartial guidance.



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Hospital staff service awards

THREE staff at West Midlands Hospital staff have received awards for years of loyal service.

Employees Sue McDonnell, Dorothy Taylor and Carol Andrews have clocked up 35 years between them at the Halesowen-based private hospital.

All three staff members received flowers and certificates in recognition of their efforts over the years.

Staff nurses Dorothy Taylor and Carol Andrews have each worked at West Midlands Hospital for 15 years, while Sue McDonnell has been a healthcare assistant in the hospital's outpatients department for the last five years.

Dorothy said: "I love working here and it's a close knit hospital with a great atmosphere."

West Midlands Hospital is one of the leading private hospitals in the Midlands.

Listed protection for memorial



Quarry Bank RBL's Eric Homer, Colin Scott, Vilma Griffin and Dennis Griffin

A GARDEN and memorial commemorating those who died during wars has been awarded grade II listed status, more than 80 years after its creation.

The Quarry Bank Peace Memorial and Garden in Stevens Park was first unveiled back in October 1931, at a dedication by the Dean of Worcester.

It was to provide a place to remember the 148 local men who lost their lives during the First World War. Over the years the memorial and garden has been added to in order to remember those killed in later conflicts with 50 names from the Second World War and one from the conflict in Afghanistan.

Views are sought on prescriptions change

RESIDENTS' views are being sought in Dudley after a plan was proposed to stop prescribing medicines for short-term or minor conditions and ailments.

'Self-managing' medicines such as painkillers, hay fever tablets, wart and verruca creams, cough and cold remedies, antihistamines and some skin products would only be offered for long-term and chronic conditions, if the scheme goes through.

The borough's health chiefs say they spend about £2 million a year on widely available, over-the-counter medicines, while GPs spend an average of £5,000 every day seeing patients who have minor illnesses that could be treated with remedies bought over the counter.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group is asking residents to give their views on the proposed changes.

For more information visit www.dudleyccg.nhs.uk/pharmacyconsult

Plans for up to 100 homes on former landfill site revealed

THE site of a former tip in Dudley could be transformed after plans to build homes were revealed.

Up to 100 homes could be built on the old Woodsetton tip on Bourne Street.

Developer Ideal Estates wants to build on the former landfill site which has not been used for around 30 years.

But the development plans have led to concerns in the area about waste buried underground being disturbed and the impact on wildlife.

Several attempts have been made to develop the land over the years but all have either been rejected or withdrawn.

Ideal Estates was prevented from building homes in 2011 but has now come back with fresh proposals.

The area is classed as a site of local importance for nature conservation and Natural England has previously objected to applications to build on the 2.9 acre site due to fears of disrupting wildlife.

An outline application for a residential development has been lodged with Dudley Council.

Woodsetton's Councillor Adam Aston said he was extremely concerned about what had been put into the land over the years and the prospect of it being unearthed.

He said: "I am very concerned and so are a lot of people who live around it."

"There is quite good evidence stuff was tipped in there which shouldn't have been. I'm really concerned about digging it up."

A design statement submitted with the plans on behalf of Ideal Estates said: "It is clear that the proposed development creates the foundations for a high quality and sustainable new place."

"Proposals respond to the specific challenges of the site and will bring about significant improvement to the local environment."

"The development will provide new residential opportunities while remediating a contaminated site."

"On this basis, the scheme should be welcomed and supported."

Motown night for volunteers

ULTIMATE and Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) charity have combined again to bring The Ultimate Soul and Motown Night back to Brierley Hill Civic tomorrow (Friday).

After a trio of successful events last year, Ultimate are back with the sound, and Dudley CVS running the bar with all profits going to the charity.

Brierley Hill Civic has the biggest sprung dance floor in the area. James Challis, from Dudley CVS, said: "We now have a fantastic venue running really well and it's a treat to welcome back The Ultimate Soul and Motown Night. Last year's nights were some of our most popular."

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Look out for common triggers of acid reflux

Rich food and booze may be common culprits, but acid reflux triggers aren't always obvious, as **Abi Jackson** reports

ACID reflux affects around seven million Brits at some point or other.

We most commonly think of it in terms of heartburn – that nasty, burning sensation in the stomach, oesophagus (gullet) and sometimes back of the throat, often accompanied by a horrible taste in the mouth, which can be distressing.

As Dr Jonathan Aviv points out in his new book *The Acid Watcher Diet* (Hay House, £12.99), however, it can also cause other symptoms beyond heartburn, including a lump-like sensation in the throat that causes difficulty swallowing, chronic coughs, sore throats and hoarseness – often people may not realise these things are linked with acid reflux.

Many of us will experience a bit of acid reflux from time to time. Some people can be more prone to it though, and it can become an ongoing problem. It's important to pay your GP a visit if you've been experiencing acid reflux symptoms for a couple of weeks or more.

Certain things are known to be common triggers for the problem, such as heavy, rich meals and eating too fast. "Acid reflux can be caused by our eating habits; eating too much or eating too much of certain types of foods, especially fatty foods, and 'treating' ourselves more often. The stomach takes longer to get rid of stomach acid after digesting a fatty meal, which can result in excess acid. This can then leak up into the oesophagus and cause discomfort," explains Shona Wilkinson, nutritionist at www.superfoodUK.com.

"Consuming more alcohol, coffee or chocolate can relax the muscles at the bottom of the oesophagus, which can then lead to a burning sensation."

But what about less obvious triggers?

CHOCOLATE

In his book, Dr Aviv outlines a two-part plan to help combat acid reflux, along the way identifying a list of things to avoid – including chocolate. It contains methylxanthine, he notes, which increases stomach acid production.

SEED OILS

Rapeseed and sesame oil might be on trend right now, but Dr Aviv notes that while they have a borderline pH, often they're essentially acidic, due to chemicals involved in the extraction process. Switch to extra virgin olive oil instead.

SIT-UPS

They may be a go-to exercise for toning and honing those abs, but if you're prone to acid reflux, doing sit-ups can encourage gastric acid to flow upwards, resulting in symptoms, points out Dr Aviv.

CANNED SOUP AND VEG

Dr Aviv notes that dietary acid can be an aggravating factor. While some foods are known for being acidic, sometimes it's a little less obvious. Canned soups and vegetables, especially if pickled or fermented, are an example. Look out for citric or ascorbic acid in the ingredients.

NOT CHEWING ENOUGH

Alison Cullen, nutrition therapist and health educator, advises to chew your food. "Try and savour the food that you eat, and chew each mouthful at least twenty times before you swallow."

TIGHT CLOTHES

An uncomfortably tight waistband, which puts pressure on the stomach, could make symptoms worse. So avoid clothing that is too tight, and wear a comfy waistband.

GETTING OLDER

Dr Sarah Brewer, GP and Healthspan medical director, points out that as we age, our digestive system becomes less effective. So the older you are, the more likely you are to suffer from heartburn.

STRESS

It's a factor in so many health conditions, and can worsen acid reflux symptoms too.

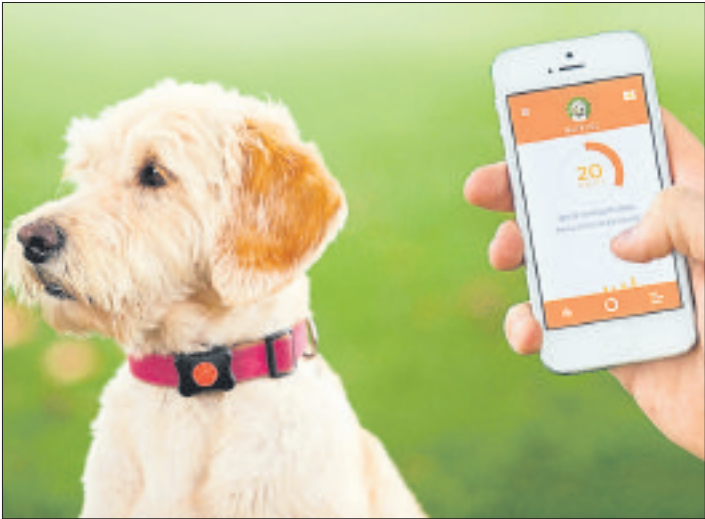
"Heightened stress and anxiety can also result in indigestion, often caused by stomach acid. To combat this, breathe deeply and slowly through your diaphragm in order to trigger the parasympathetic nervous system," suggests health psychologist Dr Megan Arroll.

SLEEPING ON YOUR RIGHT SIDE

Dr Brewer advises trying to sleep on your left side, if acid reflux is an issue. A study in the *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology* found that sleeping on your left side is the best way to avoid heartburn at night.



The ElectrIQ Wifi pet monitoring camera, from laptopsdirect.co.uk



Keep tabs on your terrier with the PitPat Pet Monitor

Try a high-tech treat for your four-legged friend

By **Julia Gray**

AS Crufts rolled into Birmingham this week (March 9-12), treat your four-legged friend to the best tech treats. . .

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

ElectrIQ Wi-Fi pet monitoring camera with audio, £39.97 from £49.97, www.laptopsdirect.co.uk

If you've ever wondered what your pooch gets up to when you're not at home, this camera might shed some light on the situation.

Hook it up to your smartphone and the camera will provide live HD streaming to your device.

And when you catch Fido hopping on the sofa - just as you suspected - you can call to him through the app (or offer reassurance if your dog is pining for you). You can also use the app to manoeuvre the camera so it focuses on another area in the room.

THIRSTY WORK

Drinkwell Platinum Pet Water Fountain, £46.99 from £49.99, Argos

This water fountain offers a tech hydration solution for thirsty pooches. All you do is add the filter, pour some tap water into the top of the device, put the lid back on and then plug into the mains. Adjust the speed at which the water flows to suit your pet and let them drink from the fountain.

Because the water is constantly circulated, it stays cool and any nasties are removed as it filters. The fountain is also suitable for moggies and its parts are dishwasher safe.

FUR YOUR EYES ONLY

Vileda Cleaning Robot, £149.99, shop.vileda.co.uk

The reality of owning a dog is that their fur ends up everywhere. Skirting boards, cushions, in the hardest-to-reach nooks and crannies - if there's even the tiniest space, you can guarantee fur will get in it.

Take the detritus to task with an intelligent Hoover. Being a robotic cleaner, this one by Vileda requires little from you, save a bit of programming beforehand. With two counter-rotating brushes, it makes short work of ridding hard floors and carpets of pooch hair. You can use it on stairs too; the drop sensor ensures it won't crash down them.

DOG EAT DOG

TD Design 4.3L Automatic Pet Feeder for Dogs & Cats, £75.99 from £99.99, Amazon

Turn to tech to get you out of a tight spot with this automatic dog feeder. Although wet food is off the menu, you can add dry food to the dispenser and programme it to serve up meals to your dog at set times.

You can also select how many portions - from one to 10 - you want your pooch to have throughout the meal. The device allows recording, so, if you like, you can add a message, which will play three times before the device starts dispensing the goods, calling to the pet in question and alerting him that grub's up. Suitable for small to medium dogs and cats, a magnetic safety lid means your pet won't be able to snaffle snacks from the top of the gadget. You'll need three D batteries to keep it running.



The PetSafe Ball Launcher takes the strain out of throwing a ball for Bonzo



The TD Design 4.3L Automatic Pet Feeder from amazon.co.uk.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

PitPat Pet Monitor, £39.99, Argos
Fitness tech is a trend that continues to grow, with trackers, monitors and apps all designed to keep us aware of our activity (or non activity).

And now you can get your four-legged friend in on the action too.

This small device fits onto your dog's collar and connects to an app on your phone to monitor their activity levels.

There are 200 breeds on the app to ensure the data and guidelines on calories and activity are appropriate for your mutt.

GET THE BALL ROLLING

PetSafe Ball Launcher, £134.99, Argos
Throwing balls for a dog can get tiring if the dog in question has more energy and interest in fetching a ball than you do.

This is where technology can help. The PetSafe Ball Launcher is an investment, but it does relieve the pressure on tired arms.

Add the balls (it comes with two, but you can use ordinary tennis balls) to the device and programme it to launch them, either in your garden or at the park - you can choose up to nine different distances (of between

2.5-9m). To keep it going, either plug it in or add six D batteries so you can roam free. There's also an automatic rest mode to ensure your dog doesn't tire.

APP OF THE WEEK

BarkCam, free, iTunes
There's no question, you need to take lots of photos of your pet dog.

So, while you're busying yourself as a member of the 'pupparazzi', try this app to catch your pooch's best side.

Before you want to take the picture, use it to select a noise to get your dog's attention and then snap away.



The Vileda Cleaning Robot, available from vileda.com

CHEERS TO THE PUB LANDLORD

— INSIDE

LET'S GO BACKWARDS TOGETHER WITH AL

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10pm - 4am



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Matinee Musical

Too Darn Hot The Wonderful West End

Tue 16 May

Jenny Eclair

How To Be A Middle Aged Woman

(Without Going Insane)

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Thu 29 Jun

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Upbringing no bar on comic licensee

There's a fine line between art and life. And while Al Murray is not really a pub landlord – he's actually a culturally rapacious, successful comic with a large house in Chiswick and a collection of Action Man-style dolls of people like Saddam Hussein and Winston Churchill – his character bears an uncanny resemblance to those who are perfectly, frighteningly real.

Take this, for instance, spoken in character: "Of course, the reason they are coming here is because this is the greatest country in the world. The only way to stop them is for a government to change that and make things a whole lot worse. Look no further. However, in the meantime we brick up the Channel Tunnel. With British bricks. Probably have to get some Poles in to do it. Common sense."

Murray is currently on tour in a post-Brexit, post-fact world. His new show is called Let's Go Backwards Together and it's been acclaimed by critics as his best. While Murray's character is resolutely commonsensical, the performer himself was educated at Bedford School and Oxford University and his ancestors include the 3rd Duke of Atholl, a bishop, an ambassador and William Makepeace Thackeray, the 19th century novelist best known for his satirical works, particularly Vanity Fair, was his great-great-grandfather.

EXASPERATED

Those impeccable credentials, however, mean nothing in the cauldron of stand-up. For Murray knows better than anyone: if you get a line wrong, there's nowhere to hide.

"I think that what some people don't realise is that there are gradations of posh. I have cousins who went to Eton. I think [people who went to] Eton, Harrow, they're properly posh. But my Dad worked for British Rail for 40 years, my mother worked for the Citizens Advice Bureau in Milton Keynes.

"We're resolutely downwardly mobile. With showbusiness, you can be as posh as you like, but if you're not delivering, then you won't get on. So I don't get annoyed, I'm just exasperated that it's supposed to say anything about me at all. I went to private school because my grandfather left some money for a grandson.

"I do accept that I am from a privileged background. I was lucky I went to private school. I know all those things. But I don't think they explain anything about me at all.

"There's an interesting idea about art right now – 'you're not allowed to imagine' seems to be the argument. So I'm not allowed to imagine what people might think, or send up how other people might think. That's an argument against art. That's an argument against creativity."

Murray's tour is under way around the UK and he'll return to Birmingham on May 22 to headline the city's REP theatre.

Murray added that his new show takes a humorous approach to



A world apart – comic Al Murray and his Pub Landlord character



the challenging era in which we live. "We live in troubling times. Europe. The NHS. Whatever the hell is going on in the Middle East. The gathering storm of fortnightly bin collections? Who knows where it will all end?"

Meanwhile, on the comedy scene this week, Jerry 'The King' Lawler, the King of Memphis and a WWE Hall of Famer, will bring his spoken word show to Birmingham's Glee Club on Wednesday.

The live, spoken word show will feature as many tales and experiences from 40 years on the road as it's possible to cram into one evening. Fans can look forward to a 'witty, articulate and impassioned'

You aren't allowed to imagine now – that's an argument against creativity.

evening and they will also be able to ask their own questions. Comedy will also be in store at the Glee Club tonight and tomorrow with a line-up of Paul Thorne, Christian Schulte-Loh, Carl Donnelly and Tom Lucy. Thorne has been described by The Guardian as a 'must-see comedian' who regularly performs at The Comedy Store and has taken his unique brand of edgy and provocative topical gags, on the spot improvisation and surreal comedy songs as far afield as Dubai, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, China and Japan.

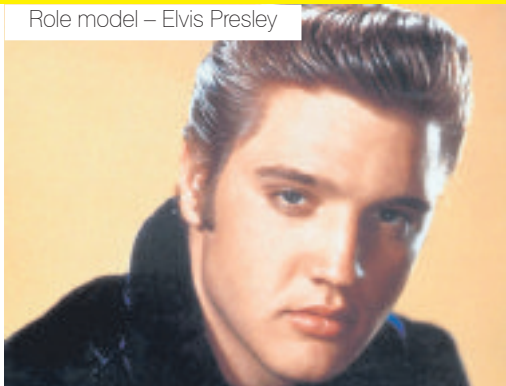
Lucy, meanwhile, has been described by Harry Hill as being an outstanding young comic who is headed for great things. In the last year, he has supported the likes of Jack Whitehall, Russell Kane, Paul Chowdhry, Simon Amstell, Russell Howard and Seann Walsh. He is also the youngest comedian ever to play professionally at The Comedy Store.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Dream part – Liam Sargeant



Role model – Elvis Presley



Just Grand – music by ‘King’ and Liam is ready to reign

HE grew up on Elvis music and now Wolverhampton student Liam Sargeant is All Shook Up having landed his dream role singing songs made famous by ‘the King’.

Liam will feature in the lead role of Chad when the rock ‘n’ roll musical is staged at Wolverhampton’s Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, March 18.

Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company (MUSCOM) will be celebrating the music of Elvis Presley in the new show set in small town America in 1955, as a musical revolution is about to happen. Fledgling actor and singer Liam has had to juggle rehearsals with studying English language

and English literature at Oxford University. He said: “I’m commuting as many times as I can. Over Christmas we got as much done as we could and that was really good. There was quite a bit of time so we managed to set the whole show. But then it was time to go back to university and so it’s not completely straightforward.”

As Chad, Liam plays a guitar-playing roustabout who rides into a square little town. Suddenly, everyone and everything changes. Inspired by and featuring the songs of Elvis Presley, this lip-curling, hip-swivelling musical comedy is based on Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night and will have fans rockin’ out of their Blue Suede Shoes.

The classic hits will include Heartbreak

Hotel, Jailhouse Rock, Can’t Help Falling In Love and many more.

Liam has been a regular with local amateur dramatics companies since a child. He said: “I’ve been singing my whole life and gradually started acting and dancing too. It’s just something I’ve always done. I’ve always been involved in musical theatre.

“I’ve been part of lots of different companies in the Midlands. I’ve played with MUSCOM and both the West Bromwich and Bilston amateur operatic societies. MUSCOM are great. I really enjoy being part of the team and I think this is my fourth show with them.”

Nothing beats coming home, however, and the Wolverhampton performer always enjoys playing at the Grand.

Shirley comedy proves to be ultimate escape

It’s been 31 years since Willy Russell’s heart-warming comedy, Shirley Valentine, took the world by storm.

It told the story of a Liverpool housewife whose kids have left home and she makes egg and chips for her husband every day, while talking to the wall. Then she escapes... to Greece.

The show was adapted into an Oscar-nominated film, starring Pauline Collins and Tom Conti, and now Jodie Prenger (pictured) is starring in the first major revival of this national treasure, which continues a week-long run at Birmingham’s New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday.

Jodie found fame on Andrew Lloyd Webber’s TV show to find a star in I’d Do Anything and was subsequently cast as Nancy in his 2009 production of Oliver!

Her recent theatre credits have included UK tours of Camelot, Tell Me On A Sunday and One Man, Two Guvnors, and a stint last festive season at the Birmingham Hippodrome panto.

SURPRISES

Then gritty Irish soul musical The Commitments, based on Roddy Doyle’s book, which was also made into a movie by Alan Parker, is staged at the Alex from Monday to Saturday, March 18.

The story about the ups and downs of a Dublin R&B band includes former Coronation Street star Kevin Kennedy.

On adapting the story for the stage, Roddy Doyle says: “I hadn’t planned to write it myself but then I did. I really enjoyed it.

We had met with a number of impressive

writers but I found I was answering all the questions the producers and I were asking them.”

On selecting the songs, Doyle says: “I wanted to go for well-known songs, but also there to be a few surprises in there.

“Soul often isn’t about the song itself, it’s about the way it is sung or how it’s interpreted. The songs were chosen because they help tell the story.”

The show is not only packed with great songs but is also laugh out loud funny.

Doyle adds: “It was always going to be a comedy. It’s about a band so it doesn’t touch on life or death, you can say ‘music is life and death to me’, but it’s not.”

There is musical nostalgia coming to the Alex soon with You’ve Got A Friend: The Music of James Taylor and Carole King on March 21 and One Night of Elvis with Lee ‘Memphis’ King on March 23.



Will You join 80s star Hazel at the Robin 2?

Eighties New Wave star Hazel O’Connor, who found fame in the film Breaking Glass, will perform in Bilston next Wednesday.

The singer-songwriter, from Coventry, recently celebrated the 35th anniversary of the film whose soundtrack, including Will You and Eight Day, went platinum and reached number five in the British album charts.

She will be joined on The Robin 2 stage by Clare Hirst, who has played sax with the Bellestars, Communards and David Bowie, and keyboards player Sarah Fisher who performed with the Eurythmics.



Nostalgia that promises fans a Wail-ers of a time

More eighties nostalgia at Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday with a line-up including Paul Young, Toyah, China Crisis and, from America, Martika. Yes fans will be out in force at Symphony Hall on Monday for a sold-out gig by ARW, which is (Jon) Anderson, (Trevor) Rabin and (Rick) Wakeman.

Coinciding with One Love: The Bob Marley Musical at Birmingham Rep (until April 8), Marley’s former musicians The Wailers have a one-off gig at Birmingham O2 Academy on Wednesday including originals Aston ‘Familyman’ Barrett, Tyrone Downie, Junior Marvin, Donald Kinsey and Earl ‘Wya’ Lindo.



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Sat 20 May	British Touring Car Championship - Oulton Park	£119
Sat 27 May	Liverpool & Chester Races	£99
Sat 3 Jun	Doncaster Races & York	£79
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Sat 1 Jul	Liverpool & Chester Races	£99
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Mon 20 Mar	5 Rhine & Moselle Inclusive	£229
Mon 20 Mar	4 Disneyland Spectacular at Dream Castle (sabb)	£339
Mon 20 Mar	5 Ostend Superdeal	£219
Mon 20 Mar	5 Rhine Valley Superdeal	£199
Fri 24 Mar	4 Ostend Inclusive Weekend	£189
Fri 24 Mar	4 Ostend Weekend Superdeal	£149
Fri 24 Mar	4 Paris Weekend Superdeal (sabb)	£159
Fri 24 Mar	4 Disneyland Spectacular at Dream Castle (sabb)	£339
Fri 24 Mar	4 Disneyland Spectacular at The B&B Hotel (sabb)	£289
Mon 27 Mar	4 Ostend Special Breakaway	£149
Fri 31 Mar	4 Disneyland Spectacular at The Kyriad (sabb)	£319

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Sat 22 Apr	Skipton Market & Harrogate Flower Show	£99
Sat 22 Apr	Coltswoods Wartime 1940's Special	£89
Sat 22 Apr	Emmerdale Studio Experience	£99
Sat 6 May	York & Emmerdale Village Tour	£99
Sat 6 May	The London Motor Show (sabb)	£99
Sat 13 May	Hobbycrafts, Stitch & Sew - Live!	£79
Sat 13 May	Abingdon Airshow & Historic Bath	£99
Wed 17 May	Emmerdale Studio Experience	£79
Sat 20 May	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
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Thu 13 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
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Sat 29 Apr	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 29 Apr	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99
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Geri Horner

Railway Nation: Across Britain in a Day (BBC2, 9pm)
Geri Horner follows in the footsteps of Tom Jones, Keith Richards, Boy George and Jazze B by revisiting the decade that has defined her life and career to date. For Geri, that decade is the 1990s, when she shot to international stardom as Ginger Spice. At the height of her Spice Girls fame, Geri helped to ensure 'Girl Power' dominated the 'Cool Britannia' scene with her iconic Union Jack dress, and here she reflects on how a working-class girl from Watford came to symbolise the gender politics of a turbulent era. She also discusses the key political and social moments of the '90s, including Nelson Mandela's release, the birth of New Labour and the launch of the World Wide Web.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Mary Berry Everyday. (R) 12.00 Football Focus – FA Cup on the Road. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. 2.15 Escape to the Country. (R) 2.45 Film: Kung Fu Panda. (2008) 4.10 Final Score. 5.10 Celebrity Mastermind. (R) 5.40 BBC News. 5.50 Regional Programme.
6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Fish, Barbara Dickson, Nick Heyward, Toyah Wilcox, Heather Small, Marj Wilson, Jessica Taylor and Kelli Young take part in a music industry-themed edition of the unorthodox quiz. (R)
6.45 Let's Sing and Dance for Comic Relief. The next round of the celebrity talent contest sees the stars of Casualty and Holly City, The Chasers, James and Ola Jordan, and EastEnders' Danny-Boy Hatchard take to the stage.
8.00 Who Dares Wins. Game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.
8.40 Casualty. Robyn takes matters into her own hands as David's manic behaviour gives his colleagues cause for concern. Meanwhile, the gang prepares to throw a 60th birthday party for Duffy.
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes is excited about Rory and Dino's big day, until she meets their flamboyant wedding planner, while Father Damien raises concerns about the ceremony. (R)
10.00 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.20 Match of the Day. Highlights of the latest Premier League matches, which included Bournemouth v West Ham United at the Vitality Stadium and Hull City v Swansea City at the KCOM Stadium.
11.05 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Action from the day's opening sixth-round fixtures, which were Middlesbrough v Manchester City, and Arsenal v Lincoln City.
11.35 This Country. The mockumentary continues, as Kerry's dad Martin is accused of being a "Peeping Tom".
12.00 Line of Duty. (R) 2.00 Weather for the Week Ahead. 2.05 BBC News.

BBC2

**6.35 Film: Yellow Canary. (1943) 8.10 Film: The Happiest Days of Your Life. (1950) 9.30 Coast. 10.00 Natural World. (R) 11.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 12.00 Two Greedy Italians: Still Hungry. (R) 1.00 The Little Paris Kitchen: Cooking with Rachel Khoo. (R) 1.30 Film: The Red Shoes. (1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama, starring Moira Shearer. 3.40 Gardeners' World. (R) 4.10 University Challenge. (R) 4.40 Only Connect. (R) 5.10 Hog It! (R)
6.00 Natural World. The natural history documentary follows the work of tough Australian Chris "Brolga" Barnes, who featured in his own BBC Two documentary series a couple of years ago, and has dedicated his life to rescuing and raising orphaned kangaroos in the outback near Alice Springs. This two-part film follows Brolga as he expands operations by opening his doors to a whole new bunch of animals, including a trio of camels, a southern hairy-nosed wombat and three emu chicks, as well as building a wildlife hospital. (R)
7.00 Natural World. Part two of two. The new animals are proving quite a handful, and with Brolga on crutches after a run-in with Roger the kangaroo, there is not much he can do at the moment. (R)
8.00 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton heads to the northernmost spur of Skye, the Trotternish Peninsula, which has a distinct identity of its own – almost as if it were an island within an island.
8.30 Dad's Army. The bumbling platoon boosts its fighting strength by acquiring an armoured car. Classic comedy, starring Clive Dunn and Arthur Lowe. (R)
9.00 Geri's 1990s: My Drive to Freedom. Geri Horner shares her memories of the 1990s, when she first achieved international stardom as Ginger Spice, and considers some of the key political and social moments of the era.
10.00 Live at the Apollo. Glaswegian comedian Frankie Boyle takes to the stage at London's Hammersmith Apollo, and introduces rising stars Jack Carroll and Holly Walsh. (R)
10.45 Film: LA Confidential. (1997) Thriller set in the 1950s, with Russell Crowe.
12.55 Taboo. (R) 2.55 Film: Rabbit Hole. (2010) 4.20 This is BBC Two.**

ITV

**6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. 6.10 Bottom Knockers. (R) 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Sooty. (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.00 Oddbods. (R) 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) 8.10 Scrambled!: Teen Titans Got It. 8.30 Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. 9.05 Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) 9.25 Alphabetical. (R) 10.20 All Star Family Fortunes. (R) 11.05 The Voice UK. (R) 12.25 ITV News; Weather. 12.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Italy v France (Kick-off 1.30pm). 3.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. England v Scotland (Kick-off 4.00pm).
6.30 Regional Programme; Weather. 6.45 ITV News; Weather.
7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The popular duo's Saturday evening variety show continues, as the pair bring back Singalong Live for the first time this series, and invite the newly reunited 1990s dance-pop outfit Steps to do the honours. Stephen Mulhern hits the streets to give members of the public the chance to win a big-money prize in In For a Penny, and the plot thickens as Emilia Fox continues to chase the mystery thief in The Missing Crown Jewels. Plus, Ant and Dec themselves star in the End of the Show Show.
8.30 The Voice UK. The remaining contestants face the third of five, live knock-out rounds, as Will.i.am's roster of hopeful stars go head-to-head in a battle for survival. Presented by Emma Willis.
9.45 ITV News; Weather.
10.05 Lethal Weapon. When Riggs and Murtaugh respond to a noise complaint, they are drawn into a case involving illegal gun-runners and advanced military technology that involves Riggs personally. (R)
11.00 Film: Rambo: First Blood Part II. (1985) John Rambo returns to the jungles of Vietnam on a mission to rescue American POWs and exact a violent revenge. Action adventure sequel, with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.
12.50 Schofield's South African Adventure. (R) 1.25 Jackpot247. 3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R)**

CHANNEL 4

**6.15 Mobil 1 The Grid. 6.45 The King of Queens. (R) 7.10 The King of Queens. (R) 7.40 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Frasier. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.00 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.55 The Simpsons. (R) 11.25 The Simpsons. (R) 12.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) 1.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 1.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.35 A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) 4.35 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.35 Channel 4 News.
6.05 Dogs Behaving Badly. Leading dog trainer Graeme "The Dogfather" Hall invites viewers to gain an insight into his work, which sees him tackle troublesome dogs – and their owners.
7.00 Crufts 2017. Clare Balding presents live coverage from the NEC in Birmingham, where the the penultimate day of Crufts is under way. Today's tentpole events include Agility and Flyball contests, and judging of the Gundog Group. "Supervet" Professor Noel Fitzpatrick is in the studio discussing scientific advances in canine health, and answers viewers' questions. He also puts his skills as a trainer to the test with an agility demonstration. Plus, Clare meets the Rev Kate Bottley from Gogglebox, who is at the show representing the Retired Greyhound Trust.
9.00 Film: Room. (2015) Premiere. A woman who has been held captive for years lives in a single room with her son, who has never experienced life beyond its walls. She resolves to make sure he has a complete and fulfilling life, but when they finally escape, she faces the challenge of helping him cope with a world he has no experience of. Drama based on Emma Donoghue's novel, starring an Oscar-winning Brie Larson, with Jacob Tremblay, Joan Allen and William H Macy.
11.20 Film: The Adjustment Bureau. (2011) Sci-fi thriller, starring Matt Damon and Emily Blunt.
1.15 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 2.05 Hollyoaks. 4.10 Shipping Wars UK. (R) 4.55 Four in a Bed. (R)**

CHANNEL 5

**6.00 Milkshake! 9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. 10.30 Access. 10.35 Benefits Britain: Me & My 14 Kids. (R) 11.30 Benefits: On the Yorkshire Dole. (R) 12.25 Benefit Beauty Queens. (R) 1.25 Dance Moms. 2.20 Dance Moms. 3.15 Dance Moms. 4.10 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) 5.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
6.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents Paul and Steve face a moral dilemma in south London, when they find out the tenant they have been instructed to evict is on his way to a funeral. Elsewhere, Stewart and Victor chase £1,000 from a debtor who has defaulted on his payment plan, but they are subjected to abuse and the police are called to a driveway standoff. Plus, two agents try to recover £1,600 worth of goods from the owner of an entertainment company after a wedding day dispute, and in west London, a landlady is owed £9,000 in rent arrears by a young mother. (R)
7.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. A vehicle transporting Jada Khaled to her criminal tribunal is ambushed, prompting the team to trace the culprit in an attempt to save her and the case. Meanwhile, concerns grow for Sam as it is the first time he has seen the former governor's sister since returning from Sudan.
8.00 NCIS. The secretary of the US Navy seeks the NCIS team's help in locating a suitable bone marrow donor for a sailor whose two Marine brothers were killed in the line of duty.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Aston Villa v Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle United v Fulham.
9.50 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce action from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Gillingham v Scunthorpe United and Cambridge United v Doncaster Rovers.
10.20 Live Boxing on 5. Craig Kennedy v Stephen Simmons. Coverage of the bout for the vacant British Cruiserweight title.
12.10 SuperCasino. 3.10 Film: London Boulevard. (2010) 4.50 House Doctor. (R) 5.15 Wildlife SOS. (R)**

DIGITAL

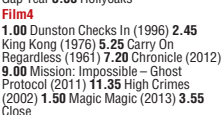
BBC Four
7.00 Britain's Outlaws: Highwaymen, Pirates and Rogues 8.00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens 9.00 Follow the Money 11.00 Top of the Pops: 1983 12.15 People's History of Pop 1.15 Blues America 3.15 Sounds of the Eighties 3.45 Close
ITV2
11.10 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 12.40 The Voice UK 2.00 You've Been Framed! Gold 2.30 FYI Daily: Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) 3.30 FYI Daily: 3.35 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) 4.25 Film: King Kong (2005) 5.25 FYI Daily 5.30 Film: King Kong (2005) 8.00 Scorpion 9.00 Film: American Pie: The Wedding (2003) 10.00 FYI Daily 10.05 Film: American Pie: The Wedding (2003) 10.55 Family Guy 12.25 American Dad! 1.20 Release the Hounds: Famous & Freaked 2.20 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 2.45 Teleshopping 5.45 ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.35 Inspector Morse 1.50 Rosemary & Thyme 2.55 Agatha Christie's Marple 5.00 Lewis 7.50 Midsummer Murders 11.00 Carry On Forever 12.00 Wycliffe 1.05 Marshlands 2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
11.00 Monster Carp 1.00 Storage Wars: New York 1.30 ITV Racing Live. Coverage of today's race meetings at Sandown Park and Wolverhampton. 4.00 Film: The Great Outdoors (1988) 5.00 FYI Daily 5.05 Film: The Great Outdoors (1988) 5.45 It's Not Rocket Science 6.45 Live Snooker: Players Championship. The concluding semi-final from Venue Cymru, Llandudno. 11.15 Film: 6 Bullets (2012) 12.20 FYI Daily 12.25 Film: 6 Bullets (2012) 1.35 Ax Men 2.30 World Cup Rivalries: Brazil v Italy 2.50 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping
E4
11.30 Film: Step Up (2006) 1.35 The Goldbergs 3.00 Black-ish 3.30 The Big Bang Theory 4.00 Film: Mirror Mirror (2012) 6.05 The Big Bang Theory 8.00 Film: Red 2 (2013) 11.15 Gogglebox 12.20 Celebs Go Dating 3.20 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 4.00 Rude(ish) Tube 4.45 Revenge
Film4
11.00 Casper (1995) 1.00 Win Win (2011) 3.10 Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) 4.55 Johnny English (2003) 6.40 Morning Glory (2010) 9.00 AVP: Alien vs Predator (2004) 10.45 Hush (2008) 12.30 The Crazies (2010) 2.30 Rec 3: Genesis (2012) 4.00 Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Sabotage, Channel 5, 11.05pm
The members of an elite Drug Enforcement Administration team secretly keep the millions of dollars they find during the raid. When they are killed off one by one, the leader becomes convinced one of his men is getting rid of the others to keep all the money, and sets out to expose the murderer. Action thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. (2014)

TUESDAY
Stranger in the House, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Newlywed Jade returns from her honeymoon to discover her recently widowed father has been seduced by the caregiver she hired to look after him in her absence. The strange situation becomes even more suspicious when Jade's dad suddenly dies from a fall, and when the young woman finds out her new step-mother is the sole beneficiary of a recently amended will, she becomes convinced a murder has taken place. Thriller, starring Emmanuelle Vaugier and Jordana Largy. (2016)



Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

WEDNESDAY
Deadly Suspicion, Channel 5, 3.20pm
The estranged family of a murdered politician suspects the killer is his mentally disturbed daughter. Thriller, starring Marilu Henner, Emily Bergl and Matt Keeslar. Edited for violence. (2008)

THURSDAY
Left for Dead, Channel 5, 3.20pm
After being left for dead, a detective develops amnesia and remembers nothing about her life or family. As she struggles to recall her past, she discovers that the road to recovery may threaten the safety of her husband and daughter. Thriller, starring Elisabeth Rohm, Tygh Runyan and Neil Napier. (2014)

FRIDAY
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, BBC1, 10.35pm
Captain Jack Sparrow battles to save his soul from the legendary Davy Jones and his fearsome sea monster. Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley, Jack Davenport and Bill Nighy. (2006)

Uhtred makes plans for revenge as series returns

The last time we saw Alfred (David Dawson), he was hiding in a swamp with Uhtred (Alexander Dreymon).

In the series one finale, the two came together to take on the Danes, who have conquered almost all the kingdoms in the realm. So, what will Alfred find on the road in season 2, as he sets his sights on the wild lands of the north?

Well, for starters, he finds a lot of suffering. With no army to defend them, his people were left to fend for themselves, and many of them lost their wealth and lives due to raids by the Danes and others.

But Alfred's conviction to create a united England is stronger than ever, and he targets the wild lands of the north, which have fallen into chaos and rebellion.

Uhtred, meanwhile, went through a subtle transformation in series one. The warrior's fiery temper cooled a little and during his time with Alfred in the marshlands, he also felt sympathy for him on account of the suffering of the king's child.

The character was willing to learn and change after his interactions with the Saxons, but this change is unlikely to be welcome to many of the other Danes.

So Alfred and Uhtred now have to find a way to fight back the Danes, and the latter also embarks on a voyage north to avenge Earl Ragnar's death and recapture his ancestral lands of Bebbanburg.

The pair's main nemesis this time around looks to be Guthrum (Thomas W Gabrielsson), Ubba's second-in command who is both intelligent, ruthless and unheinged.

This bloody Viking vs Saxon series is adapted by BAFTA-nominated and RT's award-winning writer Stephen Butchard from Bernard Cornwell's bestselling series of novels.

It is set in the ninth century at a time when many of the separate kingdoms of England have fallen to the invading Vikings, with only the great kingdom of Wessex left standing and defiant under the command of King Alfred the Great.

The emotionally complex and compelling landscape of revenge, rivalry, hostility, corruption, love, sex, loyalty and friendship forms the backdrop to a gripping adventure, and such has been its popularity overseas, this second series has seen Netflix climb aboard to co-produce the series along with the BBC.

Dreymon (American Horror Story) and Dawson (Peaky Blinders) return as the two leads, and they are reunited with Emily Cox (Homeland) who stars as Brida, Ian Hart (Boardwalk Empire) who plays Beocca and Tobias Santelmann (Marcella) as Ragnar the Younger from the first series.

The Last Kingdom has been described as 'the thinking person's Game of Thrones.'

And although the series may not ever be as popular as that – let's not forget it is an historical drama rather than a fantasy series – it certainly fills the gap for viewers thirsty for battles, gore, hairy warriors with swords and famous actors meeting grisly ends.



The Last Kingdom, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

for ever by what appears to be an innocuous discovery. Louise (guest star Keeley Hawes) and David (Reece Shearsmith) have a young daughter, a lovely house and a seemingly ordinary life. But then David finds a single black shoe and brings it home with him. Admittedly, a few people would question that decision, but for this family the shoe becomes a life-changing obsession that threatens to come between them.

WEDNESDAY
The Royal House of Windsor Channel 4, 9pm
The fascinating story of the Windsor dynasty continues, this week charting the drama and intrigue associated with Prince Charles' love-life. It begins by looking at how, during the late 1970s, the Prince of Wales resolved to avoid repeating the mistakes of his great uncle, King Edward VIII, and sought advice on marriage from another great uncle – Lord Mountbatten. Taking Charles under his wing, Mountbatten arranged a secret meeting in Paris between the heir and his disgraced 'Uncle David'. However the the exiled king's

example fails to stop Charles falling in love with an unsuitable woman, who ends up marrying one of her past boyfriends. Returning to his first love, Camilla Parker Bowles – now a mother of two – stability continues to elude the prince. And pressure from all sides prompts him to turn his eye to Lady Diana Spencer.



Inside No 9, Tuesday, BBC2, 10pm

THURSDAY
Shop Well for Less? BBC1, 8pm
Katy and Wayne Williams love designer clothes – and their passion for labels has been passed on to their eight-year-old daughter Holly, who is already very brand aware. Unfortunately, their taste for luxury comes at a price, and the couple's credit card bills are spiralling out of the control – which is where Alex Jones and Steph McGovern come in. They head to North Wales to change the family's ways, and their first act is set up a pop-up shop filled with the Williams' belongings to make them face up to the

reality of their splurges. The presenters then set about replacing some of the family's usual brands with cheaper alternatives, before taking away some of their luxuries, from hairpieces to expensive nights out. But while this leads to the Williams spending less cash – and more time together – will they be inspired to make a permanent change?

FRIDAY
Tony Robinson: Coast to Coast Channel 5, 8pm
The actor and history buff steps off the beaten track to reveal the fascinating religious and industrial heritage that underscores the near-200-mile stretch of lush and diverse countryside along northern England. Venturing from the west to the east, his journey begins in the village of St Bees where he asks: why does such a small community have such a colossal church? The morning's exploits leave Tony hungry, and he seizes the opportunity to discover the upper crust origins of the scotch egg in the Lake District. Then, at the region's most westerly lake, Tony meets a farmer taking a pioneering approach to protect the natural environment, before trying his hand at brewing the perfect pint of craft ale. The first leg of Tony's journey comes to an end at England's most remote youth hostel, Black Sail Hut.

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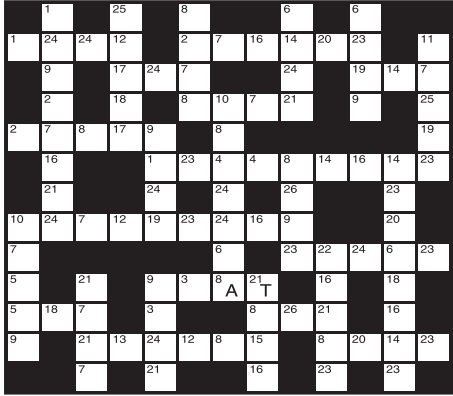
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BRAIN GYM

No.420

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

W	S	J	O	Y	H	Z	L	C	Q	N	G	A
R	T	U	X	I	D	M	V	B	E	P	K	F

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

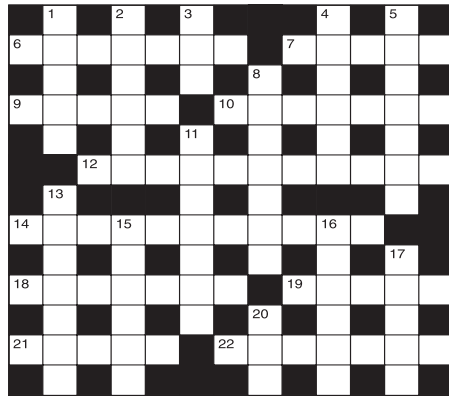
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Tell about a second reckoning (7)
- Pinafore used back in Roman or pagan days (5)
- One cent to add to the total returned makes a sweet sound! (5)
- Is it stopped to play the first note of the scale? (7)
- How to raise stock but see profits diminish? (11)
- A purposeful glance at the dictionary? (7,4)
- Muttered that mother lost blood (7)
- Don't get rid of the staff! (5)
- 21 & 22 Ac. Toss for ends? (5,2,5)
- See 21 Across

Down

1. & 3 Dn. He makes his first appearance, putting aunt badly in debt (8)
- Refinement in language? (6)
- See 1 Down
- Firing into the air by way of conclusion (6)
- Leave and throw away that young bird (7)
- Lies and disclaimers (7)
- Tool for bridge-building? (7)
- Commissioned position indeed! (7)
- The missing corpse is that of an insignificant person (6)
- Was prostrate longer through expenditure? (6)
- Series of notes on a fish? (3)
- Cook small fish (6)



Quick Clues:

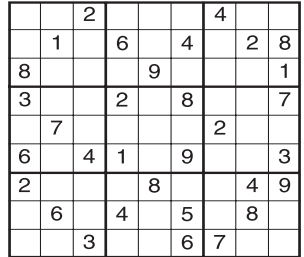
Across

- Income (7)
- Rate (5)
- Coach (5)
- Lull (7)
- Show (11)
- Bar (11)
- Free (7)
- Scatter (5)
- Pungent (5)
- Merit (7)

Down

- Joyous (5)
- Quote (6)
- Place (3)
- Seem (6)
- Under (7)
- Beat (7)
- Arch (7)
- Non-existence (7)
- Essay (6)
- Start (6)
- Quit (5)
- Chop (3)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	2	9	8	6	4	5	7	3
4	5	8	9	3	7	6	2	1
3	7	6	5	2	1	9	4	8
6	9	5	1	7	2	3	8	4
7	1	4	6	8	3	2	9	5
8	3	2	4	5	9	1	6	7
2	4	7	3	1	6	8	5	9
9	8	3	2	4	5	7	1	6
5	6	1	7	9	8	4	3	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Square meal; 7 Thumb; 8 Founder; 10 Contours; 11 Keep; 13 Seated; 15 Parsee; 17 Iota; 18 Tributes; 21 Lasting; 22 Elfin; 23 Undertakes. Down: 1 Spurn; 2 Unbroken; 3 Reform; 4 Maul; 5 Address; 6 Stock-still; 9 Repressing; 12 Daybreak; 14 Artisan; 16 Fright; 19 Tiffs; 20 Time. QUICK - Across: 1 Supervisor; 7 Erase; 8 Proceed; 10 Condense; 11 Fate; 13 Pierce; 15 Pillar; 17 Iran; 18 Christen; 21 Edition; 22 Tress; 23 Undeterred. Down: 1 Stain; 2 Presence; 3 Repeat; 4 Icon; 5 Overall; 6 Perceptive; 9 Dearness; 12 Minister; 14 Evasion; 16 Change; 19 Tread; 20 Size.

Quiz

- With which saxophone is Sidney Bechet associated?
- Who resigned in November 1994 as head of the Number 10 Policy Unit?
- In which year was the CBI established?
- Whose epic silent film The Birth of a Nation is considered the first film masterpiece?
- Who was the first member of the Royal Family to visit Argentina after the Falklands?
- From which language is Afrikaans a direct descendant?
- Which French philosopher wrote Being and Nothingness in 1943?
- With which two cities is Italian painter Canaletto chiefly associated?
- Who co-wrote Jesus Christ Superstar with Andrew Lloyd Webber?
- What are the dangerous group of islands off Land's End called?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 The electric chair; 2 Methuselah; 3 San José; 4 Ecstasy; 5 Kevin Keegan; 6 Oboe; 7 Tiger; 8 Zimbabwe; 9 Camelot; 10 A daffodil.

Niner: ARTICHOKE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

9531
71678
438421

gives a heavenly body,
gives a constellation,
gives a star sign.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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- Excursions to Osborne House, Cowes & Ryde
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- Return coach travel from Halesowen & Stourbridge

5 Day Break ~~was £279~~ **now £254**

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Mon 22 to Fri 26 May

Your break includes

- 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at the Corn Mill Lodge Hotel, Leeds
- Heritage train journey on the Wensleydale Railway
- Excursions to Thirsk, Askrigg, Kettlewell & York
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Make a night of it

Severnth heaven – Al Murray is on at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury



Comedian Al Murray is on at the Theatre Severn tonight and we're calling time please. The Ticket's here to help you enjoy some laughs with the Pub Landlord giving you the lowdown on all the best places to be. . .

MEAL TICKET



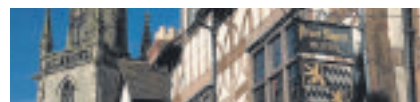
If true Brit Al Murray was heading out for eats before the gig, he would probably head to the nearest traditional boozer for some good old fashioned pub grub. Happy days as The Foundry is on site at the theatre and is all about British food. With dishes on the menu such as chicken liver pâté to start followed by rump steak with triple cooked chips or chicken supreme with creamy mash you're spoilt for choice. There are some tasty desserts too. . . spiced orange cake or brownie with chocolate sauce. Yum, yes please. If you fancy doing an 'Al Murray U-turn' when it comes to fodder, try some foreign fare at Bistro Jacques. It's fine French dining with rustic dishes that will have you saying bonjour for more.

IN THE DRINK



Where would Pub Landlord Al Murray go before a night out? A typical stop off for a quick pint and a packet of crisps would be The Coach and Horses in the town centre. The traditional and cosy Victorian pub is tucked away on a side street, Swan Hill, and is an authentic British boozer with a small side snug and a lounge bar to kick back and relax. Small sherry for the ladies?

SLEEP ON IT



If you fancy a sleepover after a night of belly laughs then there are several options in the pretty riverside town.

BARGAIN BUNK-UP

For the more cash-strapped gig-goer the best place to lay your weary head would be the Premier Inn in the centre of Shrewsbury. It's easy to get to as it's a stone throw from the theatre over the other side of the river, so you can enjoy a nice gentle walk before bed. With rooms from £41 a night it won't break the bank and you'll be sure to have some spare cash for more theatre tickets.

SPEND, SLEEP, REPEAT

If you fancy a more luxurious night of kip then book in to the four-star Prince Rupert Hotel in the town centre. It's a gentle stroll from the theatre and has plenty of fancy room options with many having views of the historic and famous 12th Century St. Alkmund's Church and the Tudor Bear Steps or overlooking the 12th Century Mansion House courtyard garden. Visit the website to get the best price. Treat yourself!

DRIVE TIME

WHEEL DEAL

The best way to get to Theatre Severn is by driving. Good news is that it's located right next to Frankwell Car Park and you'll only have to pay before 6pm, so it's perfect for showtime and will avoid additional expense. If you're using a SatNav just type in the postcode SY3 8HQ and it will get you straight to the theatre. For more information about the venue visit www.theatresevern.co.uk

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The Ticket

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

27
Stourbridge Chronicle
Thursday, March 9, 2017

Substantial family home in one of the top positions in area

A superior and substantial detached family home, 14 Clear View, Kingswinford, lies in one of the best positions within a highly sought-after area.

In a prestige cul-de-sac, approached off Lodge Lane, it is close to neighbouring countryside and Summerhill Secondary School. It is for sale through Taylors at £525,000.

In an enviable position, this includes a large block paved driveway, a generous garage together with the extensive, well-maintained and beautifully private rear gardens.

The property is beautifully maintained and well appointed throughout, all of which complements the generous layout of accommodation which includes a very large full-depth sitting room with a dining room/second sitting room off and through to the conservatory.

The family breakfast kitchen has been recently re-fitted to include appliances and positioned just off the breakfast kitchen is the laundry room. Off the landing are the four generous bedrooms, the master bedroom having re-fitted en-suite shower room and there is an attractive house bathroom.

The property is located at the head of the cul-de-sac to benefit from the 'open' front outlook and to the rear are the very secluded gardens. This home has gas central heating, cavity wall/loft insulation and double glazing.

In more detail, the reception hall has under-stairs storage and a door to the cloakroom/WC. The generous sitting room has a bow window to the front and French doors to the rear garden, as well as a living flame gas fire in an Adams' style fireplace. The dining/second sitting room has French doors to the conservatory with floor tiling.

Being re-fitted, the breakfast kitchen has cream gloss finish units, an integrated four-ring electric hob, cooker hood, an integrated double oven, large pan drawers with corner cupboards alongside and wall mounted cupboards above.

Outside, the gardens include a large patio area, generous lawns, a feature 'rockery', greenhouse, timber shed and a timber summerhouse/store.

KINGSWINFORD £525,000



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Taylors

TEL: 01384 401777

EMAIL: kingswinford@taylorsestateagents.co.uk

KEY FEATURES

Substantial detached home

Cul-de-sac location

4 generous bedrooms

Driveway & generous garage

Extensive beautiful gardens



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Home ideal for a large family has extensive secure parking

LOWER GORNAL
£299,950 <<<

An ideal property for buyers wanting extensive secure parking/garaging.

Perfect for those with a large family, this four-double bedroomed house in Straits Road, Lower Gornal, is for sale through Taylors at £299,950.

Within walking distance of the village, this is a wonderful spacious family home, said a spokesman for the selling agent.

Gas centrally-heated and with double glazing, the accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance hall, a fitted cloakroom, two reception rooms (formerly separate rooms), a huge through breakfast kitchen and a utility room.

It also features four generous bedrooms, a bathroom, a double garage/large carport, gated parking and gardens.

Please contact Taylors on 01902 880888 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Five-bedroom family home in cul-de-sac

OAKHAM
£240,000

In a cul-de-sac position just off the Oakham Road in Dingle Close, this five-bedroomed extended semi-detached family home is for sale through Trinity Property at £240,000.

Having double glazing and central heating, it has a driveway, an entrance lobby and entrance hall.

There are stairs to the first floor, a door to the downstairs WC and further doors to an open plan lounge/dining room to the front, a through room with doors to the rear garden, a utility area leading through to the modern fitted kitchen with a breakfast bar and with a family room off. There are five good-sized bedrooms, and the main bedroom with an en-suite shower/WC room off it. There is also a house bathroom/WC with a bath and separate shower. The rear garden includes decking.

Call Trinity Property on 01384 213395.



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Guide Price £125,000-£135,000

Ferndale Crescent, K'minster DY11 5LN



A superb and rare opportunity to purchase a spacious well presented two bedroom bungalow occupying a larger than average corner plot with wrap around gardens, driveway and garage. Reception Hall. Large and spacious Lounge & Dining Room. Kitchen. Rear Inner Hall. Two Bedrooms. Bathroom. Energy Rating D
KIDDERMINSTER OFFICE 01562 822244

Guide Price £150,000-£160,000

Mitton Street, Stourport DY13 9AA



In the same ownership for the last 50 years! - A spacious DOUBLE FRONTED 3-bedroom semi detached cottage right in the centre of Historic Stourport and enjoying an elevated position, also set back behind lawned foregardens therefore giving privacy from the road together with a pleasant outlook. Energy Rating D
STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

Guide Price £80,000-£100,000

Cedar Crescent, K'minster DY11 6AQ



Of interest to Builders and Developers - a 3-bedroom semi detached house requiring some structural repair work but priced very fairly and reflectively and also set within a particularly nice cul-de-sac/crescent location of only just 16 properties overlooking a "central Green". This property has amazing further potential. Energy Rating E
STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

Guide Price £150,000-£170,000

Somerleyton Av., K'minster DY10 3AS



Attractive detached Victorian Villa, comprising two flats offered for sale here in one freehold lot is the following:
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STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

Guide Price £50,000-£70,000

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Exciting times with latest Ford Performance models



Race car thrills are being transferred to the road

Ford has delivered its most exciting and comprehensive line-up of Ford Performance models ever.

Introducing an all-new 200 PS, three-cylinder 1.5-litre EcoBoost petrol engine that will deliver an unprecedented combination of power and fuel efficiency, the next generation Fiesta ST is developed using the same Ford Performance innovation mindset that delivered the Ford GT ultra-high-performance supercar, on show in Ford GT '66 Heritage Edition livery for the first time in Europe at the Geneva Show.

Ford's Performance car offering in Europe also includes the Focus ST petrol and diesel models, the acclaimed Focus RS, and the iconic Ford Mustang. Ford Performance car sales grew a further 14 per cent year-on-year in January, after recording a 60 per cent increase in 2016 – continuing the momentum from 2015 when performance car sales were up 62 per cent.

"Accessible performance is at the heart of what we do at Ford," said Jim Farley, European chairman and CEO. "From the active aerodynamics of the Ford GT supercar to the Drive Modes of our next generation Fiesta ST, our Ford Performance models are developed using innovation that brings the driving thrill of our race cars to customers on the road."

Ford Performance serves as an innovation laboratory and test-bed to create unique performance vehicles, parts, accessories and experiences for customers. This



One of the latest Ford models to hit the road

includes developing innovations and technologies in aerodynamics, light-weighting, electronics, powertrain performance and fuel efficiency that can be applied more broadly to Ford products.

The third generation of Fiesta ST will be the first Ford Performance model ever powered by a three-cylinder engine and the first Fiesta ST to feature selectable Drive Modes.

Ford's all-new 1.5-litre EcoBoost petrol engine will deliver 200PS, 290Nm of torque and anticipated 0-62mph acceleration in 6.7sec, using innovations including a new combination of port fuel injection and direct fuel injection, sophisticated turbocharging, and innovative new cylinder deactivation technology to deliver high power and responsiveness alongside reduced CO2 emissions.

New Drive Modes will enable engine, steering and stability controls to be configured to Normal, Sport and Track settings for an optimised fun-to-drive experience, and adjust the model's Electronic Sound Enhancement technology and active exhaust noise control valve to deliver an even more satisfying driving experience by amplifying the naturally sporty sound of the three-cylinder engine.

The next generation Fiesta ST also will be offered with a greater variety of interior trim and personalisation options than ever before, and will be available in both three-door and five-door bodystyles from early 2018.

The Ford GT is shown in limited edition Ford GT '66 Heritage Edition livery in Geneva. The model honours Ford's 1966 Le Mans victory, offering a Shadow Black exterior in either gloss or matte finish with silver stripes and exposed carbon fibre; Frozen White #2 hood and door graphics; and 20-inch one-piece forged aluminium wheels in a gold satin clearcoat with black lug nuts.

All Ford GT supercars feature a state-of-the-art 10-inch digital instrument display. The customisable screen features text and race-inspired graphics intended to help reduce driver distraction, and automatically reconfigures itself based on five unique Drive Modes: Normal mode, Wet mode, Sport mode, Track mode and V-Max mode.

The Ford GT's 3.5-litre V6 EcoBoost engine is SAE rated at 647hp and 550lb per ft of torque in U.S. specification. A top speed of 216mph makes the Ford GT the fastest Ford production vehicle on the track ever. The road-going Ford GT – featuring carbon fibre architecture and active aerodynamics – reflects the performance of the 2016 Le Mans 24 Hours-winning Ford Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GT race car.

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65 Reg Mondeo Hatch 2.0TDCi 180ps Titanium.....	£19,995	£26,345	£6,350
16 Reg Mondeo Hatch 2.0TDCi 150ps Titanium.....	£20,995	£25,595	£4,600
16 Reg Mondeo Hatch 2.0TDCi 180ps Titanium X-pack.....	£21,495	£27,845	£6,350
16 Reg Mondeo Estate 2.0TDCi 150ps Titanium.....	£22,999	£27,095	£4,096
16 Reg Fiesta 5Dr Hatch 1.5 Tdci 95ps Titanium X NAV.....	£14,995	£19,245	£4,250
66 Reg Fiesta 3Dr Hatch 1.0T St-line Ecst Stop/Start.....	£12,995	£17,445	£4,450
65 Reg Astra 5Dr 1.0T 105ps SRI ecoFlex Stop/Start.....	£12,495	£19,215	£6,720
16 Reg Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.4 90ps Energy Ecoflex.....	£9,995	£14,630	£4,635
16 Reg Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.4 90ps Energy Ecoflex.....	£9,995	£14,630	£4,635
16 Reg Adam S 1.4T 150ps Start/stop.....	£12,495	£18,475	£5,980
66 Reg Astra GTC Coupe 1.6CDTi.....	£18,995	£25,085	£6,090

	Selling Price	RRP	Saving
66 Reg Mokka X 1.6 Cdti 136 Design NAV Stop/Start.....	£17,495	£20,105	£2,610
66 Reg Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.4 90ps Energy Ecoflex.....	£10,695	£14,630	£3,935
66 Reg Astra Sports Tourer 1.6CDTi 136 Elite.....	£17,995	£22,725	£4,730
66 Reg Astra 1.0T 105ps Elite Ecoflex Stop/Start.....	£15,995	£20,475	£4,480
66 Reg Mokka X HAT 1.6 Cdti 136ps Elite NAV Stop/Start.....	£21,995	£25,655	£3,660
66 Reg Viva 5Dr HAT 1.0i 75ps SE A/C.....	£8,495	£10,000	£1,505
66 Reg Viva 5Dr HAT 1.0i 75ps SE A/C.....	£8,495	£10,000	£1,505
66 Reg Zafira Tourer 1.6 Cdti 136 SRI Ecoflex Stop/Start.....	£15,495	£26,680	£11,185
66 Reg Corsa Energy 1.4 A/C ENERGY 3DR.....	£9,995	£13,490	£3,495
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VAUXHALL

Vauxhall launches three new models

Vauxhall this week revealed three all-new models at the Geneva Motor Show including the Insignia Grand Sport, Insignia Sports Tourer and Crossland X.

Following on from the previous generation, which won the European Car of the Year in 2009, and sold over 25,000 in the UK last year, the Insignia is based completely on a new vehicle architecture. Its revised proportions result in a more spacious interior, giving the car a more athletic appearance and an improved road stance.

There is a raft of top technologies that make driving the Insignia safer, more relaxing and more comfortable than before. Next-generation IntelliLux LED matrix lighting, Lane Keep Assist, Head-up Display and unique AGR-certified premium seats, front- and rear-seat heating and a heated wind screen are just some examples.

Outstanding infotainment and connectivity are also on board thanks to the latest generation IntelliLink systems and Vauxhall OnStar, which with the launch of the Insignia Grand Sport, will offer even more functionality for customers. New OnStar features allow occupants to book hotel rooms and search for suitable parking spots via an OnStar Advisor.

Crisp and compact on the outside, spacious and flexible on the inside, with unique two-tone paintwork and SUV-styling, Vauxhall's all-new Crossland X makes its debut.

While the Crossland X's recently-launched sibling, the Mokka X, has all-wheel-drive capability, is 70mm higher and has larger wheels for buyers with a taste for adventure, the Crossland X has a firm family focus, with a Tardis-like cabin providing high degrees



Vauxhall's all-new Crossland X has all-wheel drive



The Grand Sport has outstanding infotainment



Vauxhall showcases in Switzerland include the new Insignia Sports Tourer with a raft of new technologies

of practicality and flexibility. And at just 4.21 metres in length the Crossland X is more compact than the Mokka X, and a full 16cm shorter than the Astra Hatch, offering owners greater convenience while driving and manoeuvring in towns and cities. Adding to Crossland X's urban appeal is an elevated seating position and an overall height, which

is raised ten centimetres above the Astra's. Exceptional driver and passenger comfort has been an obvious priority for a car entering this class. The Crossland X has specially designed AGR-certified seats for the driver and front passenger, while rear passengers can adjust their seating position to increase leg room.

Additional innovations in the Crossland X make driving safer and more comfortable, and include a 180-degree panoramic rear-view camera, advanced park assist, forward collision alert with pedestrian detection and autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, speed sign recognition and side blind-spot alert, among others.

Vauxhall Exclusive allows customers to select their car in the colour of their choice. It also allows customers to decide on one of three distinctive paint finishes: tri-coat, metallic paint and pearl. In addition, Vauxhall Exclusive will offer further personalisation including leather options, a selection of wheels and decorative design elements.

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Models shown: MG GS Exclusive with metallic paint in Sunset Orange at £19,990 and MG3 35Style in Newton Black with White Trophy Stripe graphics pack and white wing mirror caps at £10,849.40. †On the road (OTR) price of £8,399 applies to the MG3 3TTime with no optional extras and £14,995 applies to the MG GS Explore with no optional extras. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months' Vehicle Excise Duty. From prices exclude optional metallic paint, accessories and graphics packs. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply.

*0% APR. Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG3 and MG GS models until 31.03.2017. A minimum deposit of 20% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG3 models and 30% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG GS models. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

CLIFTON GEORGE LEWIS (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 50 Harrison Road Wordsley Stourbridge DY8 5XB, who died on 09/02/2014, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 19/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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 T496168

public & legal notices

MARY EVELYN TELEFANKO (Deceased)

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 T496168

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 (AS AMENDED) ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991 DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC THE COMPA, KINVER

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council intend not less than seven days from the date of this Notice to make an Order the effect of which will be to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of The Compas in Kinver from its junction with Stone Lane in a generally south-easterly direction for a distance of 120 metres unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

An alternative route for traffic is available via Stone Lane, High Street, Church Hill, Church Road, The Compas and vice versa. For more information, visit: <https://roadworks.org.uk>

The order will come into operation on 27th March 2017 and the said works will commence on or as near as practicable to that date. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by 21st April 2017.

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months, or until the gas main replacement works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director for Strategy, Governance & Change
 No. 2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford. ST16 2DH
 Ref: 32274; Enquiries: Customer Contact Centre: Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders <http://roadworks.org>
 Date: 10th March 2017

public & legal notices

MARJORIE IRENE DIXON (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 16 Ridgeway Road Wordsley West Midlands DY8 5UH, who died on 16/12/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 12/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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public & legal notices

MARY EVELYN TELEFANKO (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 62 Belmont Road Stourbridge West Midlands DY9 8BD, who died on 01/10/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 12/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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10 Personals

personal

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Battle of the sexes on the green baize

THE Golden Cue Snooker Club in Bilston hosts a battle of the sexes tomorrow night (Friday). Former world champion Ken Doherty will be checking in to play a series of exhibition frames with Dudley's 11-time women's world champion Renee Evans.

The showdown is in aid of the Paul Hunter foundation and the duo will also be cueing off against a number of local players before the evening concludes with punters having the chance to team up alongside them.

The night has been organised by world snooker coach Andrew Highfield, who plays alongside Evans for Sedgley Ex-Service in the Staffs and West Midlands League and who is a close friend of Doherty.

The night will provide some last-minute practice for Evans, who was edged out 10-8 by Doherty in the 2015 World Championship qualifiers, as she prepares to defend her world title in Singapore. She will fly out the following morning.

"It promises to be a good night and there are still tickets up for grabs," said Highfield. Tickets cost £10 and are available from the Golden Cue club on 01902 404343 or from Lee Edwards on 07834 723836.

Legendary showmen globetrot to Brum

LEGENDARY basketball showmen the Harlem Globetrotters, bring their spectacular show to Birmingham next month during the United Kingdom leg of a 2017 world tour.

The players have shot hoops with President Obama and played with Manchester United and recently wrapped up a busy 90th year tour.

During the tour they named Pope Francis the ninth Honorary Harlem Globetrotter in team history, walked the runway at New York Fashion week and broke seven Guinness World Records. They also remixed the team's legendary theme song, Sweet Georgia Brown with the help of Grammy Award-winning producer/songwriter Teddy Riley.

Throughout their history, the Original Harlem Globetrotters have showcased their iconic talents in 122 countries and territories on six continents, often breaking down cultural and societal barriers while providing fans with their first-ever basketball experience.

Proud inductees of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, the Globetrotters have entertained hundreds of millions of fans. They are at the Barclaycard Arena on April 14. Tickets are priced from £17.58. Call 0844 33 88 222

Riders rev up for the start of season

TESTING times lie ahead for British Superbike riders and teams as they split their time between the cold UK circuits and the warmer climes of Spain.

With less than a month before the BSB opener at Donington Park, Brierley Hill-born Michael Rutter is happy to wait until a week before the first race before declaring whether to run a superstock or superbike. He might even run both, depending on how testing goes.

"We're still waiting until after the final Donington Park test on March 23 and 24 before making a decision," he said. "We're also hoping to get a test date in Spain and we're happy to leave it until the last minute."

Meanwhile, the Wigley twins, aged 20, from Hedgesford, will battle it out on two different fronts. Kurt will race in the British Superstock 600 championship, on his Yamaha R6, but Matt has decided to step up an engine size for the British Superstock 1000 class on a new Kawasaki ZX10R.

Josh Hiatt, 14, from Heath Hayes, is making the step up to race in the British KTM Cup after turning down the chance to return to the Metrakit series or join the Aprilia Championships.



Jez Moxey and Sir Jack Hayward are spectators at Bilston



Former Bilston Town manager Joe Jackson

Nostalgia trip to get Town's old boys in the book

BILSTON TOWN are looking for some help as they plan a trip down memory lane.

The West Midlands League outfit want to put tales from the club's past down in print and are calling on fans, former players and committee members to come forward with their anecdotes, memories and special moments from the Steelmen's past.

Local author and club historian Jay Hearst has been commissioned to follow up the successful 'History of Bilston Town FC' book he penned in 2015 with a publication based on the more human side of Bilston Town, rather than its factual past. And chairman Graham Hodson is keen to spread the word.

He said: "Christmas 2015 saw us publish a book, written by Jay, The History of Bilston Town FC, which was particularly well received.

Anecdotes

"Based on the success of that, and the feedback received, we've commissioned Jay to write a second book," added Hodson, who has been chairman since 2009. He said this time the book would recall anecdotes, memories and moments from former and current players, management and supporters.

"We are looking for stories of the characters that played for or supported Bilston down the years and we want players, supporters, managers or committee members to recall their most memorable games, momentous occasions or cup runs.

"Young and old, local folk, anyone who has a story to tell relating to the club, we want to hear it.

"The aim is to obtain as many stories, anecdotes or memories as possible, compile and collate them, then publish them in a book. Some of the stories we have already received make fantastic, nostalgic reading."

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

"Young and old, local folk, anyone who has a story to tell relating to the club, we want to hear it"

The late 50s and 60 were arguably the club's boom time and Hodson is especially keen to get players from that era involved and hopefully those that played in the first round FA Cup clash with Halifax at Queen Street in 1968.

The Steelmen made the second round of the competition in 1972, when they were edged out 1-0 in a replay on home soil by Barnet.

"The late 50s and 60s were great times for the club," added Hodson. "Players such as Ron McDermott were legends for the club. He scored 76 goals in one season and that is still a record for the Birmingham Works/West Midlands League.

"The FA Cup matches against Halifax and Barnet were also great occasions. We lost 1-0 to Barnet with QPR waiting in round three.

"We also had a good period when Joe Jackson was here in the 90s and former Wolves player Steve Daley, who was once Britain's most expensive footballer, also managed us for a while.

"We formed a former players' association a few years ago and when we meet up the old players have always got a story to tell."

Email stories to either graham_hodson@hotmail.co.uk or bilstontownfcbook@co.uk



Club chairman Graham Hodson



A packed stand for an FA Cup game in November 1968



Bilston Town FC line up for a pre-season picture ahead of the 2003/04 campaign



The Bilston Town FC team in the 1958/59 season

Sport

Memories sought in new chapter for football club

Page 35



SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

CHRON.SPORT@EXPRESSANDSTAR.CO.UK

Hearn eggs on Sam for big pay day

STOURBRIDGE'S Sam Eggington has been promised another big fight by promoter Eddie Hearn following his stunning eighth round knockout of former two-weight world champion Paulie Malignaggi.

Eggington, aged 23, caught Malignaggi with a rib-cracking left hook and clipped him with a right for good measure as he fell to canvas during round eight on Saturday.

The American retired after the fight. Eggington was already mandatory challenger for the European belt, which he hopes to challenge for in Birmingham in May.

Eggington took to Twitter to thank fans for their support after the biggest win of his career on the undercard Haye versus Bellew. And he also promised Hearn he would be ready for the next challenge on May 13.

Meanwhile, Bloxwich fighter 'Cool Hand' Luke Paddock outclassed Lukasz Janik in the main event at Walsall Town Hall on Saturday.

The 25-year-old couldn't find the stoppage he was searching for but he impressed on his way to a 60-54 landslide victory over his Polish opponent.

Wolverhampton's Kyle Williams did well to keep composed against the aggressive Craig Derbyshire and earned a one-sided result.

The 25-year-old showed good footwork in the first couple of rounds to open up the angles against his capable opponent. Williams was confident throughout and kept a low guard but the most damaging shot Derbyshire landed was a head-butt in the fourth round which the referee scolded him for.

Williams remained calm and targeted the body whilst ensuring he kept out of trouble to secure a 60-55 victory.

Tipton's Ricky Summers took out his frustrations on opponent Remigijus Ziausys after a British title fight against Frank Buglioni fell through.

The 29-year-old worked the jab well and landed some punishing blows which Ziausys did well to take. Summers landed flush with a powerful left-right combination in the fifth but his Lithuanian opponent absorbed the damage and gave the Summers the rounds he needed in a 60-54 victory.

Old Hill's Manny 'Pac Man' Zaber was sharp from the outset as he got back to winning ways against Ricky Leach.

Town's chess club in relegation zone

STOURBRIDGE Chess Club played at Mercia on Monday in a re-arranged Dudley division 2 match. Martin Berridge, Jeremy Humphries and Chris Cox all won with Tony Shaw drawing on board 1 to give Stourbridge a convincing 3½ - ½ win. On Wednesday Halesowen visited for a Birmingham Division 2 match which Stour needed to win. Julie Wilson and Greg Dyett both accepted draw offers. John Foxall won with a back row mate so Stour were ahead. Draws for Dave Scriven and Eric Horwill made it 3-2 to Stour. Paul Sharratt lost to make it a drawn match with Stourbridge left in the relegation zone.

Day to remember for young rugby fan



Aran with Billy Vunipola

A RUGBY fan from Pedmore Technology College got the experience of a lifetime when he unveiled his school's new Canterbury rugby shirt in front of thousands at Twickenham ahead of England's Six Nations clash with Italy.

The opportunity came as part of the CBRE All Schools programme, launched in 2012 by the Rugby Football Union, which aims to get more state secondary schools playing rugby and encourage students to join local clubs.

Aran Palmer was one of 100 students from across England who took to the

pitch before kick-off, unveiling their school's newly designed shirts ahead of the national anthems.

The 13-year-old admitted the whole day - which also saw him meet CBRE All Schools Ambassador and England international Billy Vunipola, line up on the pitch for the anthems and then sit in the crowd to watch the action - would live long in the memory.

"I was so excited about being on the pitch at Twickenham," said Palmer. "The design for our shirt was inspired by the school and our area. We live near

a river which is why the shirt is in blue and the horizontal stripes across it are meant to be waves.

"On the back we have the school logo as well and we have the Olympic torch on our sleeve."

Each shirt was individually designed by the school children at Canterbury kit design workshops last year.

England and Saracens No 8 Vunipola said: "The atmosphere in Twickenham on match day is very special and it's fantastic that the students got to experience it first-hand."

Glassboys edge out Gladiators

Stourbridge 5 Matlock Town 3

THE Glassboys set themselves up for Tuesday night's derby clash with Halesowen, improving their Evo-Stik Premier promotion prospects to boot, by edging out Matlock in an eight-goal thriller.

Seven goals came in the first half, full-back Darryl Westlake getting the ball rolling with a second minute wonder strike from fully 45 yards in front of an 800-plus Amblecote crowd.

The sixth-placed visitors were level by the sixth minute when Marc Newsham headed home a pinpoint left wing cross from Ted Cribley. Stourbridge regained the lead on nine minutes with a 25-yard free-kick from the league's leading scorer Luke Benbow.

By the 16th minute, Stourbridge had made it 3-1 when Benbow surprised the Gladiators with another free-kick. This time it was played short to Shrewsbury Town loanee Ethan Jones, whose shot on the turn was blocked by Matlock goalkeeper Phil Barnes only for Jordan Archer to slot home the loose ball.

Back came Matlock to make it 3-2 on 21 minutes, Glassboys keeper Matt Gould unable to hold on to Marcus Dinanga's powerful shot.

It was 4-2 on 25 minutes, Jones netting after Matlock failed to clear a Tom Tonks corner. The goals continued to flow, Matlock making it 4-3 from the penalty spot after 28 minutes when the pacy Dinanga broke free but was brought down by Gould who was lucky to escape with a yellow card. Dinanga got up to convert.

Stourbridge eventually settled the contest when Benbow crossed from the left for Tonks to turn home a fifth goal at the near post on 72 minutes.

Matlock had Nial McManus sent off after picking up two yellow cards.

Heathens tipped to make a challenge

SPORTS broadcaster Nigel Pearson has given the new-look Cradley Heathens side the thumbs-up ahead of the season launch party tomorrow night (Friday).

All seven riders will be at the Liberal Club on Upper High Street, Cradley Heath, from 7.30pm to meet fans and present the new race jacket. All money raised will go between the riders to help with their pre-season expenses.

Pearson, part of the Heathens management team, is backing Heathens to challenge for honours. He said: "I like the way the team has been put together. I feel we can be up there challenging."

★★★

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Kettley, Telford. Thursday, March 9, 2017



STOUR HAVE NO ANSWER

Chester 31 Stourbridge 0
STOURBRIDGE'S woeful run of form continued as they shipped another defeat, this time to a Chester outfit they had comfortably beaten in November.

With table toppers Caldys next up, Stour face another heavy reversal unless they can recapture the form that saw them reach third place in National 2 North just seven weeks ago.

Both Stour and Chester are certain of retaining league status next season but that was of scant consolation to the travelling supporters who saw a disjointed performance. Stour regularly shipped penalties and were unable to hang onto the ball for any length of time.

Despite losing tighthead Mark George to injury in the opening exchanges the Stour pack had achieved scrum dominance by the hour mark, forcing Chester to re-introduce subbed second-row Ross White. But the visitors were unable to turn pressure into points and were denied even a consolation score.

Scrambled

A set of short range drives by Chester produced the opening try for flanker Kyle Joseph. A high tackle gave White a shot at goal to reduce the deficit but it rebounded off the upright and the hosts scrambled it clear.

Chester ground their way back into the Stour 22 just short of halftime when scrum-half Joe Heatley was sinbinned for offside. Outside-half Callum Bennett landed the penalty kick to make it 10-0 at the interval.

Chester worked a move from a lineout on the Stour 22 and White was worked over the line. Stour came back with a penalty award kicked to touch deep in the Chester 22 but their driving maul got held up. The pack forced a penalty at a short-range scrum but tapped and ran and saw the ball stripped in the tackle. Chester cleared and from a scrum in midfield produced another set move for centre Tom Foden to score.

Stour threw everything into a final assault but were penalised in possession and frustration started to get the better of them. Stour were driven back into their 22 and conceding a bonus-point try to a well-executed catch and drive for no8 Dave Ford.



Stourbridge captain Ciaran Moore secures a line out throw during a dire day at Chester

Pedmore overcome a sluggish start

Pedmore (122-2) beat Hagley B (91-3) by 31 runs

PEDMORE, batting first in the Kinver Indoor Cricket League, got off to a sluggish start finding runs hard to come by.

At the halfway stage, the Pedmore score was just 39, but the next six overs produced 82 runs. Dan Jones was 25 no. Hagley

B's openers scored well in reply and they were in front of the run rate at halfway.

But the scoring dropped after the openers retired, aided by three overs of quick bowling from Paul Taylor.

Hagley A (142-2) beat Oldswinford (82-3) by 42 runs
A BRILLIANT one-handed

catch by Paddy Addis removed opener Mike Stead in the third over, but then the score rattled on to 108 for the second wicket.

Jack and Harry Stanier moved the scoring on but King-swinnford were ultimately unable to keep up with the run rate. Jack Stanier took two wickets and hit 25 no.



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